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ABSTRACT

This report provides outcomes for 1996-97 for Monroe Community College's Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, an effort designed to help students learn to write in all disciplines through writing centers staffed by trained student writing fellows. Following introductory remarks, the report provides discussions of the following topics: major achievements for the year; the Writing Fellows program; procedures for scheduling tutors; statistical outcomes by semester; and outcomes from program evaluations completed by 711 students, tutors, and college faculty. Sample newsletters, bulletins, and evaluation report forms are appended. Highlights of the report include the following: (1) in 1996-97, 2,256 writing conferences were held, on a campus with 3,500 students full- and part-time; (2) their new "Writing Fellow Report" form has allowed them to streamline their data collection and guide tutors with an outline of teaching strategies; (4) the most common assignment on campus was the 500 word theme paper, followed by the research paper and the book or article review; (5) 1654 of the students served were from the Humanities/Social Sciences Department, while 289 were from Business and 189 were from Science and Math; in evaluations, 98% of the students said they would use the Writing Center again. Comments from students, faculty, and WAC staff are included. (ECF)

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Monroe County Community College

Writing Across the Curriculum Annual Report 1996-1997

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Writing Across the Curriculum Annual Report 1996-1997
Written by Timothy J. Dillon, Writing Across the Curriculum Program Coordinator
June, 1997

Monroe County Community College Humanities Division
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I. Introductory Remarks: 1996-97 Annual Report

Writing Across the Curriculum: Monroe County Community College

Focus on Quality

The 1996-1997 academic year for the Writing Across the Curriculum program (WAC) was a year in which we surpassed our goals in most areas. For example, we broke the two-thousand conference barrier by conducting 2,256 writing conferences with students. For a campus of our size--approximately 3,500 full and part-time students--this is a remarkable number of conferences. We also established a new monthly meeting format that fills the need for ongoing training for Senior Writing Fellows, and we attended professional conferences in Michigan and the Midwest as presenters and observers. Yet, for all of our accomplishments, perhaps our most important goal for 1996-1997 was to increase the level of quality within the program and affirm that same sense of quality with faculty, students, and staff.

As Robert W. Barnett states in a recent article, "The time has also come to move beyond the stories that define our existence within our own writing centers and within the writing center community" (123). While we can demonstrate with statistics and graphs that our quantitative success surpasses even our own expectations, it is more difficult to demonstrate the quality of what we do--especially to those who have no first-hand knowledge of writing centers and no experience with face-to-face tutoring. Michael Pemberton suggests, "It is important for all people who work in writing centers and think of them as important, effective, and ethical sites for learning to be able to rationalize--for anybody at any time--the benefits of what we do" (qtd. in Barnett 123). Certainly, those of us who work in writing centers and in WAC programs recognize the value of our efforts; however, it is also incumbent upon us to communicate that sense of value and quality if we expect to remain a viable part of the college learning experience, and justify money, resources, and physical space that our Writing Center and WAC program require.

With this in mind, we focused on improving the quality of what we do and communicating that quality to everyone who might have contact with our program. We wanted to move beyond just quantitative data, and move toward establishing qualitative data that would reaffirm the value of supporting this program. In the last year, we have introduced several new approaches to the WAC program, and we have expanded or refocused our efforts in already proven areas.

The first change that we made was redesigning our "Writing Conference Report Form" used in each conference (discussed in detail in section V of this report.) This report form improves the quality of each conferencing session by outlining and highlighting the most important topics that tutors and students should be discussing in a conference. In addition, changes in language and format allowed both students and tutors to communicate more clearly and efficiently. While we began using this form in winter of 1996, this is the first full year of statistics generated from its use. In addition, we redesigned our "Student Evaluation Form" that provides us with feedback on the quality of each session. Once again, the new form established clarity and efficiency, and we received valuable feedback used to improve the WAC program and Writing Center operations.

Another change was establishing monthly meetings for all Writing Fellows. These meetings allowed the experienced Writing Fellows to meet with the new Writing Fellows to discuss issues, problems, strategies, failures, and successes. In addition, the meetings were used for ongoing

training for all the Writing Fellows, so they could stay current with new ideas from other programs and develop their own ideas unique to our program. So far, these meetings have been productive and have helped to generate a stronger sense of community within the program.

We also established a new approach to creating and distributing our newsletter, "Language for Learning." Starting with winter semester 1997, we began distributing the newsletter to students, in addition to faculty and staff. We will distribute more of these in the fall to new and returning students and continue this practice as a pilot program for the remainder of the academic year. We anticipate establishing more credibility with students if they are considered part of our audience.

Furthermore, we focused on improving quality in areas already established within the program. For example, we tried to improve our faculty/tutor communications by increasing contact with faculty. Each Writing Fellow contacted a faculty member to ask if he or she could present an overview of our program to a class. We also redoubled our efforts in creating a dialogue between faculty and the tutors assigned to their courses. From this enhanced student/faculty collaboration, we made strides toward communicating our value as writing tutors and toward establishing our integrity as a learning resource.

In the area of external communications, we attended more conferences as presenters and observers this year and we had more Writing Fellows involved in professional development than in recent years. A total of nineteen Writing Fellows were able to attend three different conferences in Michigan and Pennsylvania. At these conferences, Writing Fellows were able to learn how other colleges and universities conduct the day-to-day operation of a writing center, and discuss and share ideas with faculty and tutors from colleges around the Midwest. The students who attended these conferences then reported what they learned to the entire Writing Fellow staff at the monthly meetings.

Writing Centers and WAC programs seem to be burdened with the task of constantly redefining their existence, establishing credibility with faculty and students, and reinventing the need for their services. While probably not evenhanded in relationship to other college programs, this burden will probably not disappear in the near future. Therefore, we believe that writing centers and WAC programs must move beyond the quantitative--counting conferences and participating faculty--and move toward the qualitative that includes promoting quality through training of tutors, establishing effective communications on campus with faculty and students, and finding ways to examine and evaluate each tutoring session. This is not an easy task; but then neither is helping students improve their writing. Quality was the focus of 1996-1997 and will continue to be our focus for the next several years.

II. The Year in Review

The academic year of 1996-1997 has been busy and productive for the Writing Fellow program. The WAC program seems to be firmly reestablished on campus as we continue to involve faculty and students in the process of writing to learn. While we have increased the number of writing conferences each year, as stated earlier, we especially concentrated on improving the quality of each conference for 1996-1997. To this end, we established some internal communication improvements and focused on communicating with other programs

to share experience, knowledge, and tutoring strategies. In addition we have moved toward establishing a link in the new MCCC technology, and we have made other changes to improve program efficiency and productivity.

We continue to have a strong staff of writing tutors because of the willingness of faculty to nominate quality students and because of the community atmosphere we have created in the WAC program. Forty-one students worked as Writing Fellows this year for fall, winter, and spring semesters; and approximately 20 Senior Writing Fellows will return to the program this fall with at least 14 new Writing Fellows. Once again, we can expect a competent and dedicated staff of tutors.

With this academic year, the use of our new "Writing Fellow Report" form (discussed in last year's report and in this report's introduction) has produced several positive results: we have streamlined the data we collect to mitigate vague and overlapping areas, and we have promoted quality conferencing by providing an outline of tutoring strategies and subject areas for discussion within the form that tutors use as a guide in each session. Writing Fellows have found working with this report form to be helpful and efficient. In addition, several other schools have expressed interest in the intake and exit forms we have created. The information we collect through these reports promotes good conferencing skills and offers a window into each conference–allowing us to evaluate the quality of each conference session.

As part of our evolving internal communications, we abandoned the WAC Bulletin (a weekly newsletter for Writing Fellows) in favor of monthly meetings for all Writing Fellows. The WAC Bulletin served its purpose well in establishing a communication link between myself, Coordinator of the program, and the many tutors working a melange of schedules. The WAC Bulletin, however, fell short of our goals in that it was primarily a one-way communiqué, only good for making announcements and lecturing tutors on the do's and don'ts of tutoring. This year we established one hour meetings on the third Thursday of each month. These meetings were primarily work sessions for the Writing Fellows. Fellows often interacted in groups to discuss questions of ethics, plan tutoring strategy, and review techniques used in conferencing students. We also reviewed articles on tutoring and modeled best-practice tutoring sessions. Both the Writing Fellows and myself found these meetings to be very productive, and they allowed the new Writing Fellows to generate a dialogue with more experienced tutors. While several students lamented the loss of the WAC Bulletin, we have no future plans for it. We will, however, continue to have monthly meetings for the next academic year and monitor the value of these meetings throughout.

We have continued to publish our campus newsletter, Language for Learning. This year's newsletters (in the appendix of this report) covered several broad areas of writing, such as the MCCC Writing Assessment Project, and also reported on conferences attended by Writing Fellows as well as local campus news about the WAC program. With the Winter issue of the newsletter, however, we altered our course. In the past, the newsletter was only distributed to faculty and staff on campus. On a trial basis, our plan is to change the focus of the newsletter to include articles that might also be of interest to students. Our spring newsletter included a section on how to use the Writing Center, and we will distribute it to students this fall. In the future, we hope to include more articles for students and promote the newsletter in a similar fashion to a campus newspaper. While this will increase our printing costs, we think it will increase awareness in our program and help students who may have questions about the WAC program.

In addition to internal communications, we had a successful year communicating with other WAC programs in Michigan and in the Midwest. Several Writing Fellows joined me in attending the fall "Michigan Writing Centers Project Idea

Days" held at Macomb Community College. Presentations on WAC philosophy and strategy were combined with breakout discussions involving faculty and tutors from around Michigan. We also held an exchange day with Schoolcraft College that provided tutors from both schools a forum to discuss respective programs.

Six tutors joined me at the "East Central Writing Centers Association Conference" held this year at the University of Pittsburgh. This year's conference focused on quantitative and qualitative evaluation of WAC programs. I joined Dr. Robert Barnett from University of Michigan-Flint and Dr. Dennis Thompson from Macomb Community College in a round table discussion on using report forms for evaluating tutoring sessions. The title of the session was "How Do We Know We Are Doing What We Say We Are Doing?" My third of the presentation focused on the Writing Fellow report forms I developed that prompt and encourage tutors to talk about the important, but difficult, problems in a conference. In addition to my presentation at the University of Pittsburgh, I joined Dr. John Holladay and Dr. Robert Merkel from MCCC in a presentation of our WAC program at the TRENDS conference in Traverse City, Michigan. We discussed the philosophical foundation of our program (Holladay), writing-to-learn strategies for the classroom (Dillon), and practical application for WAC in the classroom (Merkel).

For the third year we have made some changes to how we remunerate students who participate in WAC. As of last year we changed the structure to include payment of tuition at the beginning of the semester and payment of the bookstore voucher at the end of the semester. While this solved our immediate concern, increased attrition rate in Advanced Composition, we also found this system to be a cumbersome bookkeeping task for the Financial Aid office and unfair to students who were leaving MCCC and had a bookstore voucher they could not spend on books. For 1997-1998 we are piloting our third plan. We will pay for tuition and grant the Writing Fellows bookstore vouchers at the beginning of the semester. However, students must sign a promissory note stating they will reimburse the college for the full amount if they do not successfully complete the semester in the Writing Fellow program. We hope this will be fair to students, fair to the college, and still promote retention in the program.

In an effort to offer students tutoring options, we have purchased two computers for the WAC program. We hope to eventually use these for distance tutoring between campuses and between students' homes and the college. Our initial use, however, will be for students who need to work with software tutorial programs that focus on a variety of writing problems and solutions. This will allow more freedom for students to work alone when a tutor is not available and offer another tool to the Writing Fellows in helping students improve their writing skills. As part of the Intranet and Internet systems, we also plan to establish our own Website that will eventually allow students to discover and use our services over the Internet.

For the second year, the Writing Fellow staff voted for a recipient of the Writing Fellow Award. This award is given to a Writing Fellow who has demonstrated dedication to the program through extra effort and participation. Cheryl Hoy received the 1996-1997 award at the annual Honors Banquet. Cheryl has worked tirelessly for the WAC program--involved in attending conferences, writing articles for the newsletter, and often volunteering to tutor several classes in a single semester. All of the Writing Fellows and I thank Cheryl for her tireless efforts and her dedication to the goals of this program.

Three of our Writing Fellows, Cheryl Hoy, George Rhodes, and Janine Sitch, were finalists in the first Michigan Student Scholar competition held in September of 1996. In addition to their written work, each of them had to deliver an

oral presentation of their research. At the end of the presentations, Cheryl and Janine were selected as winners in their respective categories, awarded $100.00 each, and awarded publication in the Student Scholars Journal for 1996-1997.

As I look back over this year, I see an increase in the number of conferences conducted, an increase in faculty involvement, and an increase in student awareness of our program. I am most proud, however, of the increase in community spirit among the Writing Fellows. I think the monthly meetings and a renewed goal of helping students become better writers has brought the Writing Fellows together as a dedicated group. As an example, we have several Writing Fellows taking one class at MCCC, while attending other colleges, just so they can remain in the Writing Fellow program.

We also had six Writing Fellows (George Rhodes, Cheryl Hoy, Tracy Boudrie, Penny Luplow, Diana Agy, and Tricia Spitulski) volunteer their time to work with students in summer courses. It is this kind of dedication and sense of community spirit that inspires all of us to work vigorously toward our goal of helping students become better thinkers and writers.

This has been a very successful year by any standards, yet we have no plans to rest. We see the need for our program to grow and evolve. There will be new research that inspires us to new approaches, and there will be new problems to solve. But most importantly, there will be new students each year who need the WAC program and the Writing Center to help them toward their goals of academic success. We plan to be there to help them.

III. 1996-97 Writing Fellows

In a memo to faculty requesting nominations for Writing Fellows, I once posed this question I borrowed from a newsletter by U of M Flint:

> Do you have any students who like sifting through erratic pieces of information, living by their wits, negotiating with hostile clients, attending meetings, waiting for people who never show up, and working under intense pressure to meet deadlines? Oh! And who like to write? If you do, you may have potential Writing Fellows in your midst.

While a somewhat tongue-in-cheek job description for Writing Fellows, there is probably more truth in this statement than I realized at the time; and as I revisit this description, it reminds me of the hard work, dedication, and advanced stages of schizophrenia required to be a successful Writing Fellow.

Yes, Writing Fellows do sift through erratic pieces of information. Each writing fellow carefully reads between 30 and 50 papers each semester (this may be more than many faculty read); and this is no leisurely perusal of text–they read paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, and word by word. A few of these papers are well organized, developed, and mechanically correct; but the majority are "erratic pieces of information" sometimes thrown together at the last minute, resembling nothing more than a grocery list of ideas. The Writing Fellow must be able to look at a paper, in whatever condition it is in, and find potential for a well developed, organized, and correctly formatted final paper–this is often more difficult than one might imagine. In addition, the Writing Fellow must develop several strategies for improvement and communicate these strategies to the writer, so the writer will feel confident about each step of the writing process after he or she has left the conference. After all, our goal is not to help the student achieve a better grade

on a single paper, but to help the student become a better writer.

While many of the papers a Writing Fellow reads are collected from a fellowed class, meaning the Writing Fellow takes them home and spends hours reading and re-reading them, almost as many are brought in by students during last minute appointments or drop-ins. At this time, Writing Fellows truly live by their wits. In a half-hour session, the Writing Fellow must read the paper, identify the problem areas of greatest concern, communicate an improvement plan to the student, and answer any questions that the student writer might ask. Once again, papers are rarely developed or organized, and the Writing Fellow must help the student extract clarity out of chaos. I am quite proud of the job our Writing Fellows do with these papers in what we call a "cold reading."

Negotiating with hostile clients is just another daily aspect of the Writing Fellow's job. As educators, we can see the direct benefits of a tutoring program for student writers; however, students are not always as receptive to these benefits. Writing Fellows often tell stories about hostile students who are convinced when they arrive for appointments that meeting with a tutor falls somewhere in the range of public speaking and visiting the dentist. The job of the Writing Fellow is to convince them otherwise, and in most cases Writing Fellows are successful.

In addition, Writing Fellows attend more meetings on their own time than they would like; they often wait for students who have made appointments--with good intentions--but never show up; and they have deadlines for completing their tutoring work, in addition to their own studies, jobs, and families.

So why do they do it? Probably for a variety of reasons. Certainly there are rewards for helping other people that educators understand, and many of our Writing Fellows plan to become educators. Others do it for personal satisfaction, personal growth, and the opportunity to learn more about writing. For whatever reason, we are lucky to have the caliber of students at MCCC who form the foundation of this program.

This year we had 41 Writing Fellows in the program with a combined 99 semesters of experience as writing tutors. These students perform a very difficult task, and they do it well and with professionalism. In most cases, they are not only excellent students, but also excellent people who will go to great lengths to help other students. The list of 1996-1997 Writing Fellows follows with the number of semesters of experience next to each name.

Diana Agy (6)
Janice Alt (1)
John Anwiler (2)
Bonnie Berry (2)
Tracy Boudrie (4)
James Brown (1)
Terri Celski (1)
Amy Collins (2)
Sue Duval (1)
Alicia Ferris (2)
Carolyn Friedrich (2)
Tammy Hartung (10)
Cheryl Hoy (5)
Lorrie Koenig (1)
Molly Lindsey (2)
Penny Luplow (2)
Tim Lusch (1)
Michelle McLaughlin (1)
Julie Montri (4)
Stephanie Moore (1)
Steve Mullins (3)
Nichole Nemec (4)
Cynthia Petricko (1)
George Rhodes (4)
Steve Riggs (1)
Marla Roberson (2)
Linda Secco (2)
Katrina Seguin (2)
Krista Simms (1)
Brian Shortridge (2)
Lisa Smith (3)
Ann Sobecki (1)
Tricia Spitulski (4)
Vanya Steel (1)
Mischele Tomich (2)
Susan Vincelli (2)
Roblyn Warns (2)
Tina Waterstradt (5)
Sarah Weisbach (2)
Nichole Wojtyniak (2)
Emily Woltmann (2)

IV. Scheduling

The dual task of scheduling Writing Fellows into the Writing Center and assigning Writing Fellows to specific courses and instructors is essential if we are to meet with as many students as possible and provide quality tutoring for each student. In last year's annual report, I explained extensively the process of scheduling that supports the needs of faculty and students, and provides communication among faculty, students, and tutors. This process creates a triangle of communication that flows in all directions and allows all parties involved in the program to contribute to the process of improving students' writing skills. Jessica A. Inglis explains this process in her article "The Triangle of Success in Tutoring." "The roles of teacher, tutor, and student are very distinct, yet they become an integral part of each other in the learning and writing process. The teacher delivers the assignment. The student doesn't comprehend the assignment, so she goes to a writing lab tutor for help. The tutor must interpret what the teacher wants out of the assignment and then relate it to the student in a way that she can understand. A network of ideas and interpretations is formed through the intersection of these three parts that create, enhance, and evaluate the learning process" (11).

Because our Writing-Across-the-Curriculum program is closely connected to our Writing Center, scheduling Writing Fellows involves specific strategies (many colleges have separate WAC programs and writing centers and there is debate in the literature about the merit or lack of merit in having them connected. We have, however, enjoyed success with our arrangement). As the program coordinator, I must consider each tutor's experience level; background in writing; and daily schedule of classes, job, and family life. In addition, I must consider the needs of the participating faculty member, his or her expectations for the tutor/faculty relationship, and class meeting times. Quality scheduling can only occur when all of these factors have been addressed.

The heart of our writing program is WAC. In our WAC program, Writing Fellows are assigned to individual courses and work closely with the instructor and students so that students understand the writing strategies needed to successfully complete a writing project. As I have discussed in other reports, our goal is to increase the amount of writing in each and every course offered at MCCC because we believe that writing is strongly connected to learning, and without the WAC program, the number of students who use the Writing Center would dramatically decrease. Our statistics indicate that over half of all students who visit the Writing Center for the first time do so because they are in a fellowed class. In addition, we also know that many of them return for assistance with other writing projects in future courses.

In a writing-across-the-curriculum format, the role of the tutor is to help students improve their writing skills; however, there is some confusion among students about the role of writing tutors assigned to their courses. Our goal is not to improve the grade on a specific paper, but to teach strategy, planning, and process that will allow students to improve every paper he or she writes from that moment forward. For some very recognizable reasons--grades, scholarships, financial aid--students often lose sight of this goal, even when it is explained.

There also seems to be some confusion among faculty as to the purpose and goals of the WAC program. From faculty surveys and from

discussions with my colleagues, I have come to realize that some instructors expect writing tutors to teach or explain course content—an approach often called "writing in the disciplines." This, however, is not the role of tutoring in our program. Writing in the disciplines involves selecting students who have a strong background in a content area and assigning them to courses in which they can tutor writing and content. On the surface, this seems like an excellent strategy and beneficial to students. Many four-year colleges and universities employ this type of program because they have graduate students or senior content-area majors available to them. However, at a two-year institution like ours, a program like this is almost impossible. From our selection of Writing Fellows, it would be difficult to employ this type of scheduling even if there were a few tutors with a strong discipline area background. I am highlighting these two misperceptions to alleviate some confusion about the role of the tutor assigned to a specific course.

The second area of concern in scheduling is the Writing Center. As I have explained in the past, each Writing Fellow works two hours per week in the Writing Center on a fixed schedule. This allows us to schedule appointments in an orderly manner and also meet with student walk-in who do not have an appointment. As you will see on the following pages (Writing Center schedules), our availability to students is very good and we try to have Writing Fellows working when most students are on campus.

Nevertheless, these are two areas of weakness not repaired easily. The first concerns evening students. While there is a heavy influx of students each evening on campus, we usually do not have as many Writing Fellows available as we might need. Several evening instructors commented on this problem in the faculty survey; yet, there is no easy solution. Most of the Writing Fellows are full-time students with busy schedules themselves, and most want their evenings free for studying, part-time jobs, and family. Another factor is that evening students often do not have time to meet with a Writing Fellow because they have other evening commitments. The last factor involves our scheduling connection to the LAL. The LAL closes at 7:00 p.m., and we schedule accordingly—even though many classes meet later. As stated earlier, these are difficult problems to overcome. As part of our focus on quality, however, we have not given up on improving the evening tutoring schedule, and we hope to meet the needs of more evening students.

The second area of concern of both faculty and students pertains to the Whitman Center. Presently we do assign Writing Fellows to Whitman when instructors request them for a fellowed class. We do not, however, have a regular schedule of Writing Fellows to meet with appointments or walk-ins. We tried it in the past, but we were using too many tutoring hours for too few students taking advantage of the service. While I am aware that faculty and students often request we provide a regular schedule at Whitman, unless it becomes a full-service campus, I do not expect to change our role there.

In this section, I have tried to give some insight into a few of the complexities involving scheduling, and provide some understanding of how scheduling Writing Fellows in the Writing Center and assigning them to courses is linked to quality tutoring. In addition, I have tried to present some of the problem areas in scheduling that I am aware of as the program coordinator. We hope to improve in these areas. The following six pages are examples of both types of scheduling—assigned courses and daily Writing Center schedules—including the names of participating faculty and student Writing Fellows.

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WRITING FELLOW ASSIGNMENTS: Fall 1996

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
B.J. Harmon	Math 171-01	MTWF	8-9	31	Alicia Ferris Tricia Spitulski
	Math 164-01	MTWF	9-10	34	Penny Luplow Roblyn Warns
	Math 164-02	MTWF	2-3	7	Cheryl Bunker
	Math 157-01	MWF	10-11	28	Brian Shortridge Molly Lindsey
	Math 157-02	TR	11-12:30	33	Tina Waterstradt Maria Roberson
Richard Manion	Hist 154-03	TR	5:30-7pm	25	Katrina Seguin
Lawrence Leach	Phil 253-01	MWF	11-12	21	Michelle Tomich
	Phil 152-51	MW/Whitman	1-2:30	18	Roblyn Warns
	Spch 151-02	TR	9:30-11	24	Linda Secco
Joanne Jackson	Engl 252-01	S	9-12	17	Amy Collins
Robert Merkel	Engl 256-01	TR	9:30-11	23	Emily Woltman
	Engl 256-02	MWF	1-2	12	Nichole Nemec
	Music 165-01	TR	11-12:30	15	Maria Roberson
John Holladay	Phil 151-01	MWF	9-10	22	Julie Montri
	Phil 152-01	TR	9:30-11	27	Carolyn Friedrich John Anwiler
	Phil 152-02	MW	5:30-7pm	22	Cindy Petricko
James Devries	Anthr 152-01	MWF	10-11	32	Cheryl Bunker Diana Agy

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
Margie Bacarella	Polsc 151-03	TR	9:30-11	34	Steve Mullins Jim Brown
	Polsc 101-01	MW	7:8:30pm	15	Tammy Hartung
Michael Mohn	Mech 101-01	MWF	8-9	20	Nichole Wojtyniak
	Mech 101-02	TR	7-9pm	23	Lisa Smith
Karen Rimanelli	Psych 151-53	MW Whitman	7:30-9pm	33	Bonnie Berry Tricia Spitulski
Don Hyatt	BusAd 151-01	TR	2-4	34	Krista Sims Tina Waterstradt
Robert Tarrant	Acctng 251-01	MW	5-7	22	Penny Luplow
Barbara Long	Physc 151-01	MW	5:30-7pm	11	Tracy Boudrie
Joe Costello	Polsc 151-12	W	7-10pm	35	Nichole Nemec Christina Hernandez
Claudia Cines	Mcom 103-01	MW	9-10:30	22	Susan Vincelli
	Mcom 106-01	T	7-10pm	13	George Rhodes

WRITING FELLOW ASSIGNMENTS: Winter 1997

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
B.J. Harmon	Math 171-01	M/W	1:30-3	25	Emily Woltman
	Math 172-01	MTWF	8-9	17	Brian Shortridge
Richard Manion	Hist 154-01	MW	5:30-7pm	31	Tina Waterstradt Steve Riggs
Robert Merkel	Engl 256-01	T/R	11:12:30	18	Lorrie Koenig
	Engl 256-51	MW	4-5:30	22	Marla Roberson
	Music 165-01	TR	9:30-11	25	Susan Vincelli
John Holladay	Phil 151-01	MWF	11-12	22	Julie Montri
	Phil 152-01	TR	9:30-11	22	Tracy Boudrie
James Devries	Hist 160-01	MWF	10-11	20	Diana Agy
	Soc 151-03	TR	11-12:30	29	Vanya Steel Tim Lusch
	Soc 151-05	TR	5:30-7pm	24	Chris Wild
Margie Bacarella	Polsc 151-04	MWF	10-11	22	Mischele Tomich
	Polsc 151-07	MWF	12-1	27	Linda Secco Sue Duvall
	Polsc 151-08	TR	1:35-3	35	John Anwiler Steve Mullins
Michael Mohn	Mech 101-01	MW	10-12	17	Michelle Mclaughlin
	Mech 101-02	MW	5-7pm	23	Nichole Wojtyniak
Robert Tarrant	Acctng 254-01	MW	5-7pm	20	Penny Luplow
Claudia Cines	Mcom 103-01	MW	7-8:30pm	18	Janice Alt

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
Ann Orwin	Engl 252-01	TR	9:30-11	14	Sarah Weisbach
Bill McCloskey	Engl 260-01	MW	9:30-11	10	Tricia Spitulski
Stan Davis	Soc 252-01	MWF	11-12	18	George Rhodes
Cheryl McKay	Acctg 205-01	TR	7-8:30pm	23	Ann Sobecki
Kim Goss	Music 265-51	TR	4-5:30	27	Cheryl Hoy Carolyn Friedrich
Lori Bean	Chem 160-01	T	9:30-12:30	19	Amy Collins
Diane Archer	Soc 151-51	MW	2:30-4	22	Terri Celski
	Soc 152-51	MW	10:30-12	16	Roblyn Warns
Joanna Briganti	Bmgt 111-01	TR	11-12:30	17	Stephanie Moore
Terry Telfer	Engl 251-51	MW	12:30-2	20	Tammy Hartung
	Engl 260-51	TR	5:35-7	11	Bonnie Berry

Writing Center Schedule: Fall 1996
Main Campus

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 -9	Bonnie Berry	John Amrilar	Penny Luplow Michelle Tomich		Penny Luplow Michelle Tomich	
9-10	Nichole Nemec	Amy Collins Carolyn Friedrich	Nichole Nemec	Cheryl Bunker	Tracy Boudrie	Amy Collins
10-11	Bonnie Berry Roblyn Warns	Carolyn Friedrich John Amrilar	Lisa Smith Linda Socco	Cheryl Bunker Alicia Ferris	Tracy Boudrie Linda Socco	
11-12	Diana Agy Tricia Spitulski	Tammy Hartung	Lisa Smith Diana Agy	Tammy Hartung Alicia Ferris	Tricia Spitulski	
12-1	Krista Sims Maria Roberson	Tina Waterstradt	Maria Roberson Roblyn Warns	Tina Waterstradt	Susan Vincelli	
1-2	Steve Mullins	Brian Shortridge Molly Lindsay	Steve Mullins Julie Montri		Susan Vincelli	
2-3	Cindy Patricka	Brian Shortridge	Julie Montri	Molly Lindsay Emily Weltman		
3-4	Cindy Patricka		Krista Sims	Jim Brown Emily Weltman		
4-5				Nichole Wojtyniak Jim Brown		
5-6		Trina Seguin		Trina Seguin Nichole Wojtyniak		
6-7		George Rhodes Christina Hernandez	Christina Hernandez	George Rhodes		

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Writing Center Schedule: Winter 1997

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 -9	Stephanie Moore	Michelle McLaughlin	Mischele Tomich	Michelle McLaughlin	Julie Montri Penny Lupiow	
9-10		Carolyn Friedrich Susan Vincelli	Mischele Tomich	Terri Celski Steve Mullins	Julie Montri Penny Lupiow	Tim Lusch Steve Riggs
10-11	Tracy Boudrie Nichole Wojtyniak	Linda Socco Susan Vincelli	Tracy Boudrie Nichole Wojtyniak	Linda Socco Amy Collins	Bonnie Barry Tricia Spitulski	Amy Collins Vanya Stool
11-12	Cheryl Hoy	Sue Duvall Janice Alt	Cheryl Hoy Tricia Spitulski	Diana Agy Steve Mullins	Bonnie Barry	Tim Lusch Steve Riggs
12-1	Tina Waterstradt Sarah Weisbach	Sue Duvall Janice Alt	Brian Shortridge Sarah Weisbach	Diana Agy		Vanya Stool
1-2	Tina Waterstradt	Brian Shortridge		Emily Woltmann	Lorrie Koenig	
2-3	Stephanie Moore			Emily Woltmann	Lorrie Koenig	
3-4	George Rhodes Chris Wild	Maria Roberson	George Rhodes Chris Wild	Maria Roberson Carolyn Friedrich		
4-5	Ann Sobecki	John Amrller Roblyn Warns	Tammy Hartung Ann Sobecki	John Amrller Roblyn Warns		
5-6			Tammy Hartung			
6-7			Terri Celski			

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V. Statistics

In the 1996-1997 academic year, our approach to gathering statistics changed. In the 1995-1996 annual report, I indicated that we were about to pilot a new writing conference report form that I developed over several months. We had been using a form modeled after one used at the University of Toledo, and though it served its purpose, several Writing Fellows and I set a course to develop a better mousetrap. The result was the form we used for 1996-1997 (I have placed a copy of the form on the last page of the appendix since I am focusing on it for this discussion).

We had three goals when we created this form: eliminate the overlap of information, mitigate ambiguity in terminology, and most importantly, create a form that would guide a Writing Fellow through the process of tutoring for each conference. We think we accomplished all three goals, and several other colleges and universities have expressed interest in our results. While we do not think it will work for every program in its MCCC format, we do believe the basic pattern can be adapted and contribute to the quality of any one-to-one writing conference

Without belaboring this issue, I do want to explain briefly how we achieved these results. To eliminate overlapping information and reduce ambiguity in terminology, we decided to examine our program, determine the most important information, and identify the terminology we use in 254 Advanced Composition (our training course for Writing Fellows). The top portion of the form records basic information, such as a student's name, course, and date of conference. In addition, we indicate what type of paper was looked at in the conference. This allows us to determine what types of writing projects are most frequently assigned in courses at MCCC and what formats are followed. We can then plan our tutor training accordingly.

We also found that the old form used some terms that we did not use in our program, or it applied these terms differently from the way we used them. So we looked at the texts we use for Advanced Composition and the texts used in our introductory composition courses at MCCC, and employed those terms that both tutors and tutees might encounter in these texts. We think this simplified the discussion of concepts, and allowed a student to research concepts at home that he or she did not understand in class or in a conference session.

Our last improvement was the most important. Since we stress the stages of the writing process, and since we teach tutors to look at what we call higher order concerns first (content and organization), and then work toward lower order concerns (style and mechanics), we organized the report form to reflect the pattern of a quality conference. In this way, the tutor needs to look at section one, and record which stage of the writing process the student is at; then go to section two, and record what content problems the student might be encountering, and finally work through the remaining sections in the order they are listed on the form. The organization of the report form in this manner has been very beneficial to tutors who, in the heat of a conference, may become sidetracked and end up discussing lower order problems before higher order problems. The report form keeps the tutor on task, and provides an organized checklist of problem areas for the student when he or she is at home working from the report form.

So what did we learn from our gathering of statistics this year? For the first time (as stated in the introduction of the report) we broke the

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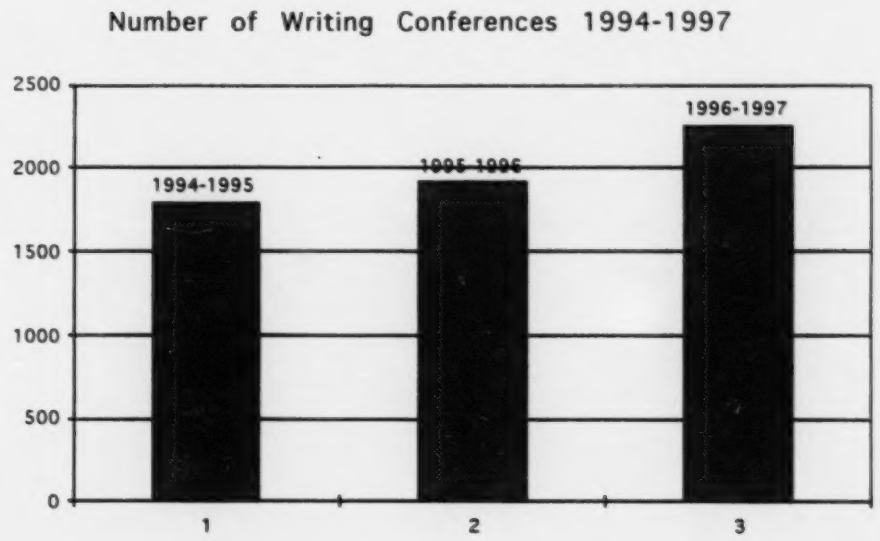
magic barrier of 2,000 conferences--we conducted 2,256 conferences for 1996-1997--a 15% increase over last year 1995-1996 and a 20% increase over 1994-1995. This is outstanding, considering the number of students attending MCCC and considering we are a commuter campus. If nothing else, I can only conclude that both faculty and students find our program to be credible and productive.

I have divided the statistics into fall, winter, and spring to present a clear picture of the work and results of each semester; and I have presented a statistical page indicating totals for the year in each category. In addition, I have provided the graph below to illustrate increases in numbers of participants over the last three years of the program--demonstrating our quantitative growth over that time period.

Statistics continue to play a role in the descriptive measurement of the successes and failures of WAC programs and writing centers; however, they are only one piece of the puzzle. They must be combined with anecdotal feedback, quality tutor training, and the establishment of goals and objectives to create a complete picture of our accomplishments.



The Writing Center: Semester Statistical Data

Semester: Fall-1996 Dates: from Sept. to Dec.

No. of Writing Conferences: Total 1069 Assignment Sheet Yes 388 No 681

Appointment	410	Main Campus	1009
Fellowed Class	593	Whitman	60
Walk-in	066	Jefferson	0

Department Represented:

Hum/Soc Science	782	Health Science	17
Business	128	Science/Math	105
Ind Tech	37		

Writing Assignment:

500+ Word Theme	427	Essay Test	4	Paragraph	1
Bk/Art Review	35	Journal	65	Res. Paper	318
Business Report	109	Lab Report	20	Tech. Report	21
Creative Writing	10	Outline	3	Other	18

Stage of Writing Process:

Prewriting	243	Final Draft	29
Revision	717	Rewrite Final	03
Editing	70		

WF Assisted W/Content:

Subject (ideas)	34	Topic Sentences	86
Thesis	148	Purpose/Audience	72
Development	455	Other	9

Method of Organization:

Example	20	Descriptive	23
Comparison	21	Definition	11
Div/Class	6	Analogy	5
Narrative/Chron	4	Argument	42
Analysis	17	Process	0
Cause/Effect	5	Other	0

WF Assisted W/Organization

Arranging Ideas	94	Paragraph Unity	95
Introduction	163	Paragraph Cohesiveness	42
Paragraph Order	46	Conclusion	199

WF Assisted W/Style

Diction	118	Syntax	155

WF Assisted W/Editing

Punctuation	123	Frag-RO-FS	71
Spelling	56	Grammar	62

WF Assisted W/Format

MLA/APA etc.	168	Following Instructor's Directions	62

The Writing Center: Semester Statistical Data

Semester: Winter-1997 Dates: from Jan. to Apr.

No. of Writing Conferences: Total 1100 Assignment Sheet Yes 488 No 612

Appointment	402	Main Campus	1001
Fellowed Class	607	Whitman	99
Walk-in	91	Jefferson	0

Department Represented:

Hum/Soc Science	808	Health Science	30
Business	159	Science/Math	63
Ind Tech	40		

Writing Assignment:

500+ Word Theme	423	Essay Test	1	Paragraph	1
Bk/Art Review	164	Journal	1	Res. Paper	338
Business Report	77	Lab Report	24	Tech. Report	39
Creative Writing	1	Outline	12	Other	19

Stage of Writing Process:

Prewriting	127	Final Draft	40
Revision	852	Rewrite Final	4
Editing	81		

WF Assisted W/Content:

Subject (ideas)	50	Topic Sentences	115
Thesis	176	Purpose/Audience	96
Development	539	Other	6

Method of Organization:

Example	12	Descriptive	11
Comparison	54	Definition	8
Div/Class	4	Analogy	0
Narrative/Chron	1	Argument	75
Analysis	56	Process	2
Cause/Effect	3	Other	0

WF Assisted W/Organization

Arranging Ideas	111	Paragraph Unity	139
Introduction	170	Paragraph Cohesiveness	75
Paragraph Order	77	Conclusion	167

WF Assisted W/Style	Diction	175	Syntax 276
WF Assisted W/Editing	Punctuation	187	Frag-RO-FS 122
	Spelling	70	Grammar 96
WF Assisted W/Format	MLA/APA etc.	266	Following Instructor's Directions 147

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The Writing Center: Semester Statistical Data

Semester: Spring-1997 Dates: from May to June

No. of Writing Conferences: Total 87 Assignment Sheet Yes 23 No 64

Appointment 31 Main Campus 78

Fellowed Class 52 Whitman 9

Walk-in 4 Jefferson 0

Department Represented: Hum/Soc Science 64 Health Science 0

Business 2 Science/Math 21

Ind Tech 0

Writing Assignment: 500+ Word Theme 45 Essay Test 0 Paragraph 0

Bk/Art Review 2 Journal 0 Res. Paper 39

Business Report 0 Lab Report 0 Tech. Report 0

Creative Writing 0 Outline 0 Other 1

Stage of Writing Process: Prewriting 1 Final Draft 1

Revision 82 Rewrite Final 0

Editing 3

WF Assisted W/Content: Subject (ideas) 0 Topic Sentences 24

Thesis 37 Purpose/Audience 1

Development 31 Other 8

Method of Organization: Example 0 Descriptive 3

Comparison 5 Definition 3

Div/Class 5 Analogy 0

Narrative/Chron 0 Argument 6

Analysis 4 Process 0

Cause/Effect 0 Other 0

WF Assisted W/Organization Arranging Ideas 8 Paragraph Unity 9

Introduction 15 Paragraph Cohesiveness 4

Paragraph Order 2 Conclusion 21

WF Assisted W/Style Diction 11 Syntax 27

WF Assisted W/Editing Punctuation 24 Frag-RO-FS 10

Spelling 4 Grammar 8

WF Assisted W/Format MLA/APA etc. 48 Following Instructor's Directions 10

The Writing Center: Semester Statistical Data

Semester: FL-WI-SP 1996-1997 Dates: from Sept. to June.

No. of Writing Conferences: Total 2256 Assignment Sheet Yes 899 No 1357

Appointment 843 Main Campus 2088

Fellowed Class 1252 Whitman 168

Walk-in 161 Jefferson 0

Department Represented: Hum/Soc Science 1654 Health Science 47

Business 289 Science/Math 189

Ind Tech 77

Writing Assignment:

500+ Word Theme	895	Essay Test	5	Paragraph	2
Bk/Art Review	201	Journal	66	Res. Paper	695
Business Report	186	Lab Report	44	Tech. Report	60
Creative Writing	11	Outline	15	Other	38

Stage of Writing Process:

Prewriting	371	Final Draft	70
Revision	1654	Rewrite Final	7
Editing	154		

WF Assisted W/Content:

Subject (ideas)	84	Topic Sentences	225
Thesis	361	Purpose/Audience	169
Development	1025	Other	23

Method of Organization:

Example	32	Descriptive	37
Comparison	60	Definition	22
Div/Class	15	Analogy	5
Narrative/Chron	5	Argument	123
Analysis	77	Process	2
Cause/Effect	8	Other	0

WF Assisted W/Organization

Arranging Ideas	213	Paragraph Unity	243
Introduction	348	Paragraph Cohesiveness	121
Paragraph Order	125	Conclusion	387

WF Assisted W/Style

Diction	304	Syntax	458

WF Assisted W/Editing

Punctuation	334	Frag-RO-FS	203
Spelling	130	Grammar	166

WF Assisted W/Format

MLA/APA etc.	482	Following Instructor's Directions	219

VI. WAC Program Evaluation by Students

As part of our focus on increasing the quality of each conference, we continued to use exit evaluations from students who participated in a conference with a Writing Fellow. The purpose of this type of evaluation is twofold. First, we are able to gather some raw quantitative data that indicate to us the number of students who were either first-time participants or returning participants, whether or not the tutoring session was required or voluntary, and the likelihood that a student will use this service again. Second, we are able to look at this raw data and determine to some degree the quality of the conference experience for each student. We also ask for comments from students on how we are doing, which provides us with critical feedback from outside the program that yields another view of the conference experience.

This year we had 711 evaluation forms completed. This is an increase of over 300 evaluations from last year. This increase can be partially explained by an increase in the number of conferences from last year, but I believe two other factors also had an influence: our increased focus on quality conferencing and the commitment by all of the Writing Fellows to encourage students to complete these evaluation forms.

WAC programs in Michigan's colleges are growing out of necessity each year, and subsequently requiring more funding, staff, and physical space. It is no surprise to WAC supervisors that colleges are demanding accountability in the form of quantitative and qualitative statistics and other forms of data. In this endeavor, I believe MCCC is at the forefront of Michigan two-year and four-year colleges. The data we collect will allow us to develop and regulate our program to assist our students in their pursuit of improved writing skills. Perhaps the most important part of the qualitative puzzle is student feedback because it tells us what our clients think of our performance.

The anecdotal responses, again this year, indicate an overwhelming positive attitude toward the program. I have divided the comments into two groups: those who were first time participants and those who were returning participants. Each of these categories are also sub-divided into fall and winter semesters. Overall, the majority of first-time visitors were surprised at how helpful the tutoring was and how relaxed they felt during the session. In addition, we know that while many of them attended a conference only because it was required, they indicated they would return for more tutoring. I should note here that there is a philosophical debate in WAC literature on whether or not students should be required to participate in the WAC program or have it left to their own volition. Those who oppose requirement suggest that students are being asked to do something beyond the normal limits of a course and that students do not respond well when forced to attend a conference. At MCCC we have taken the position that while some students will not benefit from required conferencing, the majority who experience tutoring find it valuable and constructive. In addition, we do not believe that asking students to participate in a dialogue about writing is beyond the limitations of the classroom setting. To the contrary, we think it is contiguous and integral to the classroom setting, since writing is the culmination of thinking and learning. I think that both the anecdotal and statistical data support our view in this debate.

A few other comments by students also indicate that the tutoring process, as we teach it to the Writing Fellows, is working well. Several

comments from returning students state or imply that the Writing Fellows helped them with writing strategies, developing ideas and sources, and organizing their work. This is important because what we do in WAC is viewed by some as more than tutoring. WAC programs have been inaccurately accused since their inception of crossing the line of academic propriety, and allowing outside contributions to influence students' work. "Obviously, to maintain credibility in an academic institution, where honesty is a cornerstone, papers must belong to the writers who compose them" (Ammirati 8). Our tutors are trained to help students with the skills of writing, and they understand very clearly the line between tutoring and actually doing the work for students–and they do not cross the line.

Comments by students also suggest the motivational influences this program can have on them. Several comments indicate that when students know they have a writing conference they become more motivated to complete their work on time, spend more time preparing their work, and take more pride in the finished product. These are three key areas in determining the success of any writing project, and we think that one-to-one conferencing strongly motivates students in these three areas.

The negative responses were primarily about the availability of our services. Several students complained that we are not open enough hours or that we should be open more in the evening. On the first point, I think we are more than "just" available for most students. The Writing Center is open 56 hours per week and Writing Fellows often meet with students on off hours. However, because we are housed in the LAL, we must adhere to the LAL schedule. This limits the number of hours we are open in the evening, and I think the night students are shortchanged because of this. Nevertheless, until we have our own autonomous physical space, this is unavoidable.

In addition, some students complained that we do not have regular hours at the Whitman Center. We tried this in 1994-1995 without much success, and while I understand that Whitman students are inconvenienced by this, I think a main-campus focus for our program works best. We do assign Writing Fellows to courses at Whitman when requested by faculty, but as mentioned earlier, when we had a staff at Whitman, very few students used the service.

I have divided student evaluation statistical data into fall and winter semesters. (We collected data in spring semester, but there was not a significant amount to alter the yearly statistics, so I did not list it separately.) Perhaps the most significant information from the 1996-1997 student evaluation statistics is how little they vary from last year's statistics. In most categories there were only a one or two percentage points difference, and in some cases there was no change at all. I think this suggests program stability in quantitative and qualitative performance.

There was an increase in the percentage of students who indicated they were required to see a Writing Fellow even though one was not assigned to the course (some instructors require students to have a conference even though a Writing Fellow was not available for assignment to that specific class), and a small increase in the number of students who requested writing conferences on their own. In both instances, these are positive numbers for our program, reflecting interest by faculty who see our program as valuable enough to require participation and by students who also see our program as a valuable part of their education.

The data on performance remained excellent with 96% of respondents indicating that the written comments they received from the Writing Fellow were "very helpful" or "helpful." Ninety-six percent also indicated that the conference time was "very helpful" or "helpful." In addition, 96% of the respondents found the Writing Fellow who worked with them to be "very effective" or "effective," and 96% of the respondents evaluated the Writing Center as "very effective" or "effective."

respondents evaluated the Writing Center as "very effective" or "effective."

These numbers speak for themselves, but certainly, the credit for this qualitative data belongs to each Writing Fellow who worked so diligently with each student. As indicated earlier in this report, the number of conferences we conducted surpasses almost everyone's expectations for a campus of this size, but more important than just conducting conferences is that each student leaves a conference feeling more confident and prepared to write on the college level. Our clients, the students of MCCC, seem to overwhelmingly have that feeling.

Evaluation Questionnaire Comments

(Fall Semester: those using the Writing Center for the first time)

"My conference was very helpful. She pointed out things that I needed to document. I will be making another appointment because it helped me a lot."

"Mischelle was very helpful. While I didn't have any immediate problems, she gave me suggestions for finding topics in the future."

"The Writing Center is a great asset to MCCC."

"It is important to have people who understand what you are doing and the subject you are writing about. She gave the impression of being very knowledgeable."

"She was polite and helped me step by step with what I needed to know. She seems like she has been in my position before. I like it when someone knows what she is saying and doing."

"My conference was really an enlightening experience. She helped me out but made me think."

"Excellent! She didn't try to re-write my work. Good balance of good and bad comments. I was not sure I wanted to do this, but I will use this as a tool always."

"I think this is a wonderful program because it's quick, free, and I get immediate feedback. I have told friends who attend other colleges that don't have a facility like this, and they think I am very lucky."

"I am very satisfied with the Writing Fellow program. Since this was my first time here, I didn't realize that such a thing existed. Now that I know, I will be here again and again. Thank you so much!"

"My conference was excellent. I learned about many problems in my writing that I was unaware of."

"They tell you what you do not want to hear, but you need to hear it. This is very helpful."

(Comments from those returning to the Writing Center)

"The only problem is that I live in Temperance and it is a long drive. Other than that the Writing Center is a great help to me."

"The Writing Fellow was particularly adept at explaining writing skills. Her use of diagrams and examples made an imprint I'm likely to hold on to."

"Cindy was very kind and extended an invitation to further assist me at any time. Her comments were constructive and I believe that I will turn in a better paper because of her help."

"The Writing Center needs to be open more hours. Later at night would be helpful."

"Susan has really go me motivated on my writing. She got my brain working on ideas. I'm now working towards an A paper. I don't want to settle for a C paper anymore."

"Each time I come here I see vast improvement in my writing style. I have seen three different Writing Fellows and each has been very helpful in pointing out items in my paper needing improvement."

"I think the program is a great asset to the college. This program has been very beneficial to me each time I have made an appointment. The Writing Fellows seem very caring and helpful."

"I wish instructors could speak to Writing Fellows prior to assignments. The first ten minutes of the appointment is always wasted on assignment sheets rather than my paper."

"It is always good to have an interested reader who will be objective about what you have written. It is the only way to know if you have made your meaning clear."

(Winter Semester: those using the Writing Center for the first time)

"It was very helpful to have things pointed out that I missed. She also offered suggestions on how to make my paragraphs flow together. Overall the experience was very helpful."

"The Writing Fellow really put me at ease and I feel a lot more relaxed about beginning my project."

"I haven't used the Writing Fellow program before, but I would definitely use it again. It was very helpful and beneficial to me and to my paper."

"My paper is very important to me. I have already revised it 10 times. By doing this I have confused myself even more. Marla was very helpful in slowing me down to reorganize my thoughts. She gave me great ideas on how to organize my thoughts to get my most important points across."

"Since I had not had Composition II yet, the Writing Fellow was very helpful. The mechanics have changed quite a lot since I had written my last research paper."

(Comments from those returning to the Writing Center)

"I have had lots of good experiences with the Writing Center, and find it a valuable aid in writing papers."

"Marla has been an inspiration to me. She has helped me with the simple things that I have overlooked."

"I would encourage anyone and everyone to visit a Writing Fellow before a paper is due. They are a lot of help for students like me."

"The Writing Center needs more night appointments after 6 p.m. during weekdays."

"My Writing Fellow was friendly and seemed genuinely concerned about my paper. She also met with me on a day that she was not usually in the Writing Lab. She went out of her way to help me."

"It is very helpful to be able to talk about concerns or questions with regards to the paper. The conference gave me more confidence in being able to fulfill the assignment successfully."

"Well worth my time and effort!"

"I think the Writing Fellows are useful because people do not usually recognize problems in their own papers."

"I have used a Writing Fellow many times and I strongly encourage others to use them."

"I am pleased with my visit to the Writing Center. The Writing Fellow made me feel at ease and was tactful and diplomatic in his assessment of my paper. I found the time well spent and the suggestions quite valuable."

"My purpose was to get helpful revision ideas for my paper. I got exactly what I was looking for."

Writing Fellow Sue Duvall (left) helps a student with her paper.

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Fall Semester: 1996

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

The total number of respondents was 342. Percentages indicated as 1% may actually be less.

Why did you come to The Writing Center?

Course requirement:	63%
Needed help with specific assignment:	23%
To improve writing skills:	13%
Reputation of the Writing Center	01%

How did you arrange your Writing Fellow conference?

Writing Fellow assigned to course:	48%
Made my own appointment:	47%
Walk-in (no appointment):	05%

Was this your first conference with a Writing Fellow?

yes: 32% no: 68%

Did you find it convenient to use the Writing Center?

yes: 99% no: 01%

Did the Writing Fellow identify problems in your writing of which you were unaware?

yes: 97% no: 03%

Was the Writing Fellow courteous and respectful?

yes: 100% no: 00%

Will you likely use the Writing Center again?

yes: 99% no: 01%

How helpful was the Writing Fellow Report (written comments about your paper)?

Very Helpful:	75%
Helpful:	19%
Marginally Helpful:	04%
Not Helpful:	02%

Fall Semester: 1996

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

How helpful was your conference time with a Writing Fellow?

Very Helpful:	75%
Helpful:	21%
Marginally Helpful:	02%
Not Helpful:	02%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Fellow who helped you with your writing?

Very Effective:	82%
Effective:	12%
Marginally Effective:	03%
Not Effective:	03%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Center?

Very Effective:	74%
Effective:	22%
Marginally Useful:	01%
Unsatisfactory	03%

Winter Semester: 1997

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

The total number of respondents was 369. Percentages indicated as 1% may actually be less.

Why did you come to The Writing Center?

Course requirement:	66%
Needed help with specific assignment:	24%
To improve writing skills:	09%
Reputation of the Writing Center	01%

How did you arrange your Writing Fellow conference?

Writing Fellow assigned to course:	47%
Made my own appointment:	46%
Walk-in (no appointment):	07%

Was this your first conference with a Writing Fellow?

yes: 31% no: 69%

Did you find it convenient to use the Writing Center?

yes: 99% no: 01%

Did the Writing Fellow identify problems in your writing of which you were unaware?

yes: 98% no: 02%

Was the Writing Fellow courteous and respectful?

yes: 100% no: 00%

Will you likely use the Writing Center again?

yes: 98% no: 02%

How helpful was the Writing Fellow Report (written comments about your paper)?

Very Helpful:	82%
Helpful:	15%
Marginally Helpful:	01%
Not Helpful:	02%

Winter Semester: 1997

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

How helpful was your conference time with a Writing Fellow?

Very Helpful:	82%
Helpful:	15%
Marginally Helpful:	01%
Not Helpful:	02%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Fellow who helped you with your writing?

Very Effective:	86%
Effective:	11%
Marginally Effective:	01%
Not Effective:	02%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Center?

Very Effective:	79%
Effective:	17%
Marginally Useful:	01%
Unsatisfactory	03%

1996-1997 Academic Year

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

The total number of respondents was 711. Percentages indicated as 1% may actually be less.

Why did you come to The Writing Center?

Course requirement:	65%
Needed help with specific assignment:	23%
To improve writing skills:	11%
Reputation of the Writing Center	01%

How did you arrange your Writing Fellow conference?

Writing Fellow assigned to course:	47%
Made my own appointment:	46%
Walk-in (no appointment):	07%

Was this your first conference with a Writing Fellow?

yes: 32% no: 68%

Did you find it convenient to use the Writing Center?

yes: 99% no: 01%

Did the Writing Fellow identify problems in your writing of which you were unaware?

yes: 98% no: 02%

Was the Writing Fellow courteous and respectful?

yes: 100% no: 00%

Will you likely use the Writing Center again?

yes: 98% no: 02%

How helpful was the Writing Fellow Report (written comments about your paper)?

Very Helpful:	79%
Helpful:	17%
Marginally Helpful:	02%
Not Helpful:	02%

1996-1997 Academic Year

The Writing Center

Student Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

How helpful was your conference time with a Writing Fellow?

Very Helpful:	79%
Helpful:	17%
Marginally Helpful:	02%
Not Helpful:	02%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Fellow who helped you with your writing?

Very Effective:	84%
Effective:	12%
Marginally Effective:	02%
Not Effective:	02%

What is your overall evaluation of the Writing Center?

Very Effective:	77%
Effective:	19%
Marginally Useful:	01%
Unsatisfactory	03%

VII. WAC Evaluation by Writing Fellows

As in preceding years, I have surveyed the Writing Fellows for their input into improving the WAC program. The Writing Fellows are involved in the daily task of tutoring students, scheduling fellowed classes into the Writing Center, and confronting problems that arise daily. Their understanding of the program is unique and important, and I find their comments, evaluations, and suggestions valuable.

The questionnaire I have each Writing Fellow complete is quite extensive and covers philosophical as well as practical applications of the program. I submit a sampling of the questions and responses that reflect the involvement of the Writing Fellows and their desire to make this the best program possible.

The primary area of concern voiced by Writing Fellows was for physical space. Many of them see a strong need for a separate physical space for the Writing Center. The LAL's services are growing in volume each year, as is the Writing Center's, and the ability to provide quality tutoring, privacy for students, and a quiet work environment has become compromised by housing the Writing Center in the LAL. Both the tutoring staff of the LAL and the Writing Fellows work together very well to provide quality service; however, when space is limited, service may suffer. As program coordinator, I join the Writing Fellows in this concern. I sincerely hope we can examine the possibility of a separate facility for the Writing Center, and I will submit a proposal for such a facility this year.

Following are the Writing Fellows responses to several questions asked of them at the end of this year:

Has working as a Writing Fellow met your expectations? Explain.

"I was very nervous at the beginning, but now I feel comfortable. I enjoy helping other students as much as I can."

"I expected it to be a grueling task, but I actually enjoyed it. I also expected it to be a proud accomplishment and I felt extremely confident and proud to be a writing fellow."

"Yes. I like seeing the 'light go on.' Students need a safe haven to go to discuss writing. I like being a part of this ongoing discussion of writing which makes us all more aware of the power of words as well as how to improve our skills. Being a Writing Fellow isn't a one-way street. I learn so much each time I conference a student."

"Working as a Writing Fellow has allowed me to better understand the writing process and help others through this process also. It was probably more than what I expected in a good way."

"Yes. The tutoring experience is very rewarding and the support and encouragement of the faculty only intensifies this."

What type of students do you think are helped most by the program?

"Everyone benefits. The poor writer sees an opportunity to improve and the proficient writer finds his blind spots."

"I would say it was the average writing student that I helped. Most of them had an idea of what they wanted to say, but were not saying clearly."

"Procrastinators because when there is a Writing Fellow assigned to their class, they are forced to have some kind of rough draft finished in a timely fashion."

"I think all student writers are helped by this program, and I have seen good and bad writers come to me."

"I believe all types of students are helped. Those most receptive will benefit greatly, but if a tutor walks away with even one idea or improvement . . . the session is a success."

What one or two things would you do to improve the effectiveness or efficiency of the program? Please be specific.

"The program would benefit from it's own space, separate from the other tutoring services."

"Push for our own room and find a copier we can actually use without the fear of reprimand."

"I would bring in computers, the Internet, and email. I would have an online writing center along with the current one. Whitman students could be linked to main campus and the Writing Center that way."

"I would like a handbook for Writing Fellows--examples of all different kinds of papers."

"More privacy in the Writing Center. I think that sometimes students are reluctant to share ideas because there are so many people around."

"I would like a friendlier, more relaxed atmosphere. I would be great if we had our own room."

How do you feel about the working relationship you have with the instructor of your fellowed class?

"I have an excellent working relationship with the instructor of my fellowed class. We communicate very well."

"All the instructors are very supportive. Our success as Writing Fellows depends on clear communication with the instructors, and at MCCC instructors make the Writing Fellows feel welcome when approaching them with concerns."

"I had a great experience with the instructor I was assigned to. He was open, approachable, supportive, prepared, and organized. We talked after I fellowed his class and he seemed happy with my performance. A big positive!"

"My instructor was very negative. She believed in the program, however, she wanted to modify it to suit her purposes."

"Very positive. I would think that meeting with the professor after every paper is important in order to discuss positives and negatives."

Given the fact that we will have monthly meetings, is there anything you especially liked or disliked about them? Do you have any suggestions for improving the meetings?

"The meetings were interesting. Perhaps if we had an occasional speaker or writing presentation the meetings might be even more interesting."

"I thought it was a chance to see the other Writing Fellows and get advice about tutoring."

"I liked the meetings because they allowed me to meet the other Writing Fellows and learn things about the tutoring process."

"The purpose of them is what? Time is precious and sometimes we waste valuable time rehashing the same things for a few people."

"I think we talked too much about the previous meeting . . . . I would like to spend the entire meeting doing activities like we do the second half of the meeting."

"Sometimes it was a challenge to make arrangements in my schedule to make each meeting.

"I liked the fellow-groups we worked in. I think that maybe we should discuss our problems or questions more often."

"I like the chance to get together and interact."

"I do not love or hate the meetings, but I do think they are necessary."

"I loved the group activities--more please. They bring a cohesiveness to our Writing Fellow program."

"I liked the meeting in which we each had to take a draft home, fill out a report, and then discuss our reasoning with the rest of the class."

"The mini-workshops are wonderful to remind us of our goals, and having guest speakers is another great idea."

"I would like to hear more 'tricks of the trade' other Writing Fellows use. Also hearing about the experiences of other fellows and how they deal with different situations would be nice."

Would you be willing to put in more time to learn about the technology of distance tutoring, computers, and the Internet? Why or why not?

"Yes. I love the Internet and I am extremely interested in distance tutoring."

"Yes. Computers are common in most other writing centers, and MCCC needs to pursue the latest technology. Other colleges and businesses expect students to have the skills and experience needed to use this technology."

"Possibly. Computer tutoring [distance learning] seems very impersonal. How can we tell who we are tutoring?"

"I'm not very enthused about distance tutoring. Yes, it's high-tech and neat, but I am a stickler for the personal contact—one-on-one."

"Yes! But I want to have an impact as to how we use technology without losing the benefit of the face-to-face personal touch."

VIII. WAC Evaluation by Faculty

This year I also surveyed the participating faculty for their reflections on the WAC program. Twenty-seven faculty members responded to the survey, and their responses provide some supportive information we can use as we continue to serve faculty at MCCC.

The first few questions asked them to look at why and how they were using the program. Faculty can use the WAC program in several ways. For example, some faculty make tutoring mandatory for all students; while some provide a reward, such as bonus points, for doing so; and others allow students to decide for themselves. While we recommend mandatory visits to the Writing Center, we also recognize different approaches appeal to different instructors. The first two questions in the survey examined the perceived success or failure of each approach. In addition, I asked each instructor to identify our shortcomings. A sampling of their responses are found below.

I also developed a statistical description of their responses to questions about how they communicate the Writing Center to their students, why they use the Writing Center, and how well they perceive we are doing are job. Those statistics follow the anecdotal comments. The majority of respondents found that Writing Fellows are knowledgeable about writing, that their students' papers improved, and that the amount of communication with the Writing Fellows is sufficient. One area of weakness several cited is the availability of Writing Fellows--these comments related to our lack of evening hours as discussed earlier in this report.

In last year's report, I indicated that we were going to conduct an extensive survey mirroring a survey conducted nine years ago by John Holladay. Regretfully, we did not complete that survey in 1996-1997, but we still plan to complete that work within the next year. The primary differences between the survey in this report and the one Dr. Holladay conducted is the number and type of respondents. In a broader survey, like the one Dr. Holladay conducted, we will ask for responses from all faculty, regardless of their use or knowledge of the program, rather than just those who are currently using the program.

From all indicators in the survey below, we have strong support from faculty who use the program; however, we will only be able to examine the full perception of the WAC program by surveying all faculty--full and part-time.

Faculty Comments:

If you found your approach (voluntary, mandatory, grade incentive) successful, please explain why it worked for your course(s).

"It demonstrated to students how important writing is to their success." (mandatory)

"In the past I found the very students who needed a Writing Fellow the most did not go unless required." (mandatory)

"Nearly everyone found a way to meet with the Writing Fellow. The second draft was always better." (mandatory)

If you did not find it successful, how would you change your approach next time? Why?

"Not as many participated as I would have liked." (grade incentive)

"I may make this mandatory. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for students at MCCC." (voluntary)

"Set up appointments earlier." (mandatory)

Will you describe one or two ways the program met your expectations.

"The WFs advised the students on the particulars of writing an analysis."

"It required students to get an objective opinion to review the content/clarity of their work. It also eliminated the need to use valuable class time for teaching reteaching procedures."

"Improved immensely the quality of the stock report."

"It helped the students realize how important the writing process is, and it gave them greater confidence in their final draft."

"The writing is more focused and easier to read."

"It is well run. The WFs are very professional in their approach."

"The papers I read were at the 'college level'--papers which are not fellowed are not."

Will you describe one or two ways the program did not meet your expectations.

"Not many students took advantage."

"As usual, most of the WFs did not stop in to see how they did on the first paper."

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"For the type of analysis my classes use, I would probably be sure the WFs attended the explanation (assignment) class."

"She (Writing Fellow) wasn't always available in the evening when the working students needed her. It would help to have a WF available at night for the night classes."

Do you have one suggestion to improve the program?

"For a technical class, I think the assigned WF should either be a veteran WF, so that they only have to deal with the technical field or a 1st time WF with a technical background. . . ."

"When a class has two or more papers, require the WF to get an evaluation of their work on the first paper before the 2nd due."

"The WF assigned to a science writing project must have science knowledge to understand what the student is trying to write."

"Have WFs available earlier in the semester, so we can begin within the first few weeks."

Faculty Evaluation Questionnaire Statistics

The total number of respondents was 27. Percentages indicated as 1% may actually be less.

What approach did you take in telling your students about the Writing Fellow assigned to your course?

Voluntary:	11%
Mandatory:	56%
Grade Incentive Provided:	33%

Did you find your approach successful?

Yes:	81%
No:	19%

Do you plan to participate in the Writing Fellow program again?

Yes:	93%
Next Semester:	63%
Future Semesters:	37%
No:	7% (respondents retiring)

How do you recommend the Writing Center to your students?

I request a tutor make a presentation:	78%
I tell my class(es) about the Writing Center:	67%
I recommend the Writing Center in my syllabus:	44%
Other:	1%

Why do you recommend the Writing Center to your students?

To start an assignment:	19%
To help with organization:	78%
To help with structure:	70%
To help with developing ideas:	52%
To help with grammar and spelling:	59%
To ensure they are following directions:	48%
Other (please specify) _____	

The number of hours and the times of day that the Writing Center is open is adequate.

Strongly Agree 37% Agree 22% No Opinion 33% Disagree 08% Strongly Disagree 0%

The Writing Fellows seem knowledgeable about writing and the writing process.

Strongly Agree 52% Agree 48% No Opinion 0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree 0%

I think my students' writing improved as a result of working with a Writing Fellow.

Strongly Agree 52% Agree 45% No Opinion 3% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree 0%

My students seem more confident about writing as a result of working with a Writing Fellow.

Strongly Agree 26% Agree 41% No Opinion 33% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree 0%

My students seem to have developed a more positive attitude toward writing as a result of working with a Writing Fellow.

Strongly Agree 22% Agree 37% No Opinion 37% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree 0%

The overall communication among the program coordinator, Writing Fellow(s), students, and instructor was adequate.

Strongly Agree 52% Agree 48% No Opinion 0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree 0%

IX. WAC Budget Report

Below is the budget report indicating total cost (excluding the Coordinators salary) for the years 1995-1997. In addition, the projected costs for 1997-1998 are included. Our goal has been to keep the program costs under $20,000.00 and to this date we have been successful. However, with increases in wages and tuition, the cost will rise over the next several years.

Rate:	Senior WF (279.00) Number of WFs & Cost	Novice WF (229.00) Number of WFs & Cost
Fall 1995	14 (3,906.00)	15 (3,435.00)
Winter 1996	21 (5,859.00)	13 (2,977.00)
Spring 1996	5 (1,395.00)	
	Total $17,572.00	

*Fall through Winter of 1995-1996 figured at the current rate ($279.00 and $229.00) to show an average. The actual rate was $3,400.00 less or a total of $14,171.00.

	Number of WFs & Cost	Number of WFs & Cost
Fall 1996	15 (4,257.00)	16 (4,024.00)
Winter 1997	23 (6,777.00)	14 (3,278.00)
Spring 1997	4 (1,116.00)	
	Total $19,452.00	

*Out of county tuition adds $72.00 per student: fall semester: (1 Senior WF and 5 Novice WFs)
winter semester: (5 Senior WF and 1 Novice WF)

Rate: (1997-1998)	Senior WF ($288.00)	Novice WF ($238.00)
Projected:	Number of WFs & Cost	Number of WFs & Cost
Fall 1997	15 (4,320.00)	20 (4,760.00)
Winter 1998	20 (5,760.00)	15 (3,570.00)
Spring 1998	4 (1,152.00)	
	*Total $19,562.00	

*Out of county students increase this total by $78.00 each, per course. I estimate no more than $600.00 to $1,000.00 to be added to the total budget to cover out of county rates, if needed.
*My estimate has room for increasing or decreasing the number of Senior or Novice WFs, depending on availability, while maintaining a target number of 35 for each semester.

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Appendix

I. Language for Learning Newsletters 42

Fall Newsletter 42

Winter Newsletter 50

II. Writing Fellow Report Form 58

Nichole Wojtyniak (left) fills out a Writing Fellow Report at the end of a conference.

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Language For Learning News

Vol. 9, No. 1, November 1996
Editor: Timothy J. Dillon
Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program

Notes from the Editor

As usual, the fall newsletter doesn't go to print until about mid-semester; yes, even later this time, but I would like to welcome you back to college anyway before moving on to other business.

There are several reasons the WAC newsletter arrives late in the semester. The primary reason, however, is that we are busy assigning Writing Fellows to classes, making contacts with instructors, organizing weekly schedules in the Writing Center, and yes, even planning for winter semester. So as you see, we are a busy group with much to accomplish in a short time. This I am certain all of you can appreciate, since your schedules are probably very similar.

Another reason for mid-semester publication is that we want to document activities, accomplishments, and program growth which have not occurred early in the semester. We think that when you read about the things we have been doing this semester, you will agree that we do indeed provide a valuable service to our students at MCCC. With that in mind let me tell you a little about our program this year.

..What's Inside..

Writing Assessment at MCCC
by Tim Dillon

Ideas Exchange Day
by Cheryl Bunker

Holladay, Merkel, and Dillon present WAC at TRENDS.

Internet Chat
Documenting Internet Sources

We have 31 tutors in the program this semester--15 Senior Writing Fellows, who have more than one semester of experience, and 16 Junior Writing Fellows new to the program. We have 15 instructors participating in the program and we are fellowing 29 separate courses in Humanities, Mathematics, Science, Industrial Technology, and Business. We are very excited this year about the range of disciplines participating in our program. This means that students really are engaging the learning process through writing across the curriculum. And after all, this approach to education has been a documented success for about 3,000 years.

In this issue you will read about the MCCC writing assessment project, developed in the winter of 1996 and piloted in the spring of 1996. We also have a report on the Idea Days Conference held at Macomb Community College attended by four Writing Fellows and myself. In addition, John Holladay, Robert Merkel, and I presented a session on writing across the curriculum at the fall Trends conference in Traverse City, and we also have the usual notes and announcements about past and upcoming events related to the WAC program. Succinctly, I think there is something here you might be interested in, so read on and enjoy.

Tim Dillon, editor

Writing Assessment Takes First Steps at MCCC

In the fall of 1995, MCCC launched its Outcome Based evaluation program in which several general education skills were identified as targets. To no one's surprise, writing was identified as one of the targeted skills. The process of assessing these general education skills, as charged by the college, was to define the skill, create student outcomes, revise outlines of instruction, form subcommittees, assess random samples of the skill as demonstrated by students, and report the findings.

In the winter of 1996, the first writing assessment committee met to create a procedure and a form that would allow us to objectively assess the writing skills of MCCC students. The committee consisted of Angie Evangelinos, Bill McCloskey, Robert Merkel, Terry Telfer, Tim Dillon, Ralph Trease, and Dan Metzger. After several meetings and discussions, and much individual work, the committee decided on four writing outcomes. The committee agreed that these outcomes are basic writing skills required for success in college courses. The fours skills are:

Each student will:

- demonstrate the ability to write paragraphs that develop logically from a unifying idea;
- demonstrate the ability to use one of several traditional rhetorical modes in a succession of paragraphs that are unified and coherent;
- demonstrate the ability to address a specified audience with appropriate diction and with correct standard American usage;
- be expected to submit papers that are carefully and effectively prepared.

The committee also identified "specific skills" appropriate to each outcome and created a numerical system for evaluating each skill.

Random samples of capstone-project writing were selected from courses identified by instructors as having a writing-skills outcome. These samples were then evaluated by a subcommittee comprised of Angie Evangelinos, Robert Merkel, Tim Dillon, and Jack Woltman.

Each piece of writing was read and evaluated by two committee members using a descending 4 (highest score) to 1 (lowest score) scale.

To create the statistical information, the committee relied on the help and expertise of Alan Hileman and Jack Woltman. For statistical reasons, the overall scale was based on a 95% maximum, meaning the best any paper could score was 95. The point equivalent was 4=95, 3=85, 2=75, 1=65. While some of this math logic escapes those of us in the Humanities department, we have been assured by Alan and Jack that this does indeed work, so please direct any questions to them.

The readers scored the samples and the accumulative data was configured. The results were as follows:

- 82.5% of the samples contained paragraphs that developed logically from a unifying idea (outcome 1);
- 80.9% of the samples used identifiable rhetorical modes in a series of unified and coherent paragraphs (outcome 2);
- 79.9% of the samples used appropriate diction and Syntax (outcome 3);
- 79.9% of the samples were carefully and effectively prepared (outcome 4);
- 80.75% of the samples demonstrated effective and appropriate college-level writing (cumulative average).

The committee then focused on the writing weaknesses of MCCC students, as indicated by the assessment data. From these findings the evaluators of the samples concluded that certain areas of writing should be given attention by all instructors assigning writing in their courses. The items of focus are:

Outcome 1: state supporting evidence clearly and explicitly, arrange supporting details according to an organizing principle, avoid shifts in tense, person, and number, use transitions to show relationships among ideas;

Outcome 2: write effective introductions and conclusions, write with a unifying idea, use transitions to connect paragraphs;

> Outcome 3: demonstrate proper grammar and mechanics, use sentence variety and syntax appropriate to the assignment, use college-level diction;
>
> Outcome 4: writing should be readable and compelling, each piece of writing should have a definite structure--beginning, middle, and end.

As the WAC coordinator, I was interested in comparing the findings of this committee to the data collected in the Writing Center. In looking at strengths and weaknesses of students' writing as reported from tutor-student conferences, I found a correlation between the assessment committee report and what Writing Fellows are observing and working with in the Writing Center.

In the 1995-1996 year, we conducted 1917 conferences in the Writing Center. Keeping in mind that in each session Writing Fellows only discuss one or two of the most critical problems, I found that our numbers mirrored many of the findings of the assessment committee.

For example, one of the recommendations of the committee was to focus on writing effective introductions and conclusions. In the Writing Center, 576 of the 1917 conferences dealt in some way with introductions or conclusions. Once again, considering that each conference only focuses on one or two problems, this number is quite substantial.

The committee also noted a problem in stating supporting evidence clearly and explicitly. Once again I found that the Writing Fellows reported discussing "development" (supporting evidence) in 582 of 1917 conferences.

In addition the committee suggested special attention be given to syntax and diction. This correlates with Writing Center data which reflects 424 conferences focusing on syntax or diction.

The correlations continue, although not as strongly, in the areas of thesis statements, paragraphing, using transitions, and following formatting directions. Succinctly, those weaknesses in our students' writing listed above are not imaginary--they are real.

So what can we do? I think it is important that we all begin to use writing in our courses in some capacity. The use of discovery writing--not necessarily formal papers--to engage students in learning is effective as both a learning tool and as a means to improve writing skills. I have written about discovery writing in past issues of this newsletter, but if anyone needs more information or suggestions, drop me a note and I will forward that information to you.

We must also instill in our students a sense of pride and professionalism about the written work they produce--especially for finished papers and other final writing assignments. If we accept slovenly composed and formatted work, the students' work will reflect those meager expectations. Whereas, if we raise the bar and expect work that has been thoroughly drafted, revised, and edited, students will meet those expectations as well.

Of course, I must mention what seems to me to be the most obvious tool available to all of us: the Writing Center. In almost every newsletter and every report, I repeat ad nauseam that when we provide significant incentive (e.g., a requirement) for students to use the Writing Center, they find it a valuable service and they return of their volition. In fact, on student questionnaires, 99% of first time users of the Writing Center said they planned to return for more help.

In contrast, we know from our data that when students are left to their own motivations for using the Writing Center, approximately 40% of them never use the service. When thinking about these statistics, it is difficult to understand why we would not require students to use the Writing Center facilities.

The work of the assessment committee is, however, not finished. During fall semester, the evaluators met several times to fine tune the evaluation form. The changes were significant and necessary to ensure that others who may use the same evaluation tool will understand the direction and goals of this committee.

This spring, the same four evaluators will again assess random samples of writing, collect data, and form conclusions about students' writing at MCCC. I will then take a look at the results and correlate this data with the Writing Center data, and include it in the WAC annual report.

I pause here for one more small, but not too intrusive, sermon. If as instructors, we passively make note of the writing assessment results and build our syllabi without writing components, students will not have a reason or a vehicle to improve their writing skills. If, however, we begin to include writing in our courses, students will have both a reason and a vehicle to improve their writing.

While I cannot cite the study, I know that several years ago the state of Kentucky mandated

writing across the curriculum in all public elementary schools. Within two years the increase in test scores was remarkable. In surveys, the WAC program was most often cited as the primary reason. This, I think, is convincing evidence of the power of writing as a learning tool. End of Sermon.

I am convinced that the writing assessment was, and will be, a valuable tool in gauging the success of our student writers. Almost no one can get by anymore without knowing how to write, least of all college students. The communications systems our students will work with in the very near future demand the ability to communicate clearly, organize information, and develop understandable presentations of ideas. Without these skills, our students will fall behind. And in a world where everything is analyzed and evaluated, it is no longer acceptable to guess about what we are teaching and what our students are learning. We must observe, measure, and improve.

Idea Days Conference

On 19 October, four Writing Fellows and myself attended the Michigan Writing Center Ideas Day Conference held this year at Macomb Community College. The Writing Fellows were Julie Montri, Penny Luplow, Cheryl Bunker, and Tricia Spitulski. This conference is held annually for the purpose of allowing writing center directors, staff, and tutors to participate in a dialogue about administrative and tutoring concerns. In addition, each college shares various tools of operating a writing center--such as forms, promotional documents, pamphlets, and reports--so we might draw upon other's ideas to improve the overall performance of Michigan college writing centers.

The conference began with an interesting and thought provoking theater production by MSU administrators and tutors. There were three groups who put together short skits dramatizing a theme connected to working in a writing center. The theory behind the theater is that we must learn to express our experiences in language to be able to step back and look more objectively at our own practices. While I am certain this is one of those times that you had to be there to fully understand, I can safely say that everyone was stimulated and challenged by the presentation.

Other session presentations were: How Do We Know if Our Writing Center is Successful, Tricks of the Tutoring Trade, Helping ESL Students, Your Writing Center's Manual--Let's Get Started, and Ethical Dilemmas in the Tutoring Session: What Would You Do If . . .? Each of these sessions was repeated in the afternoon so that each participant could attend more than one session.

I attended the session on evaluating success in the writing center. A lively discussion was held concerning resources and strategies for evaluating the success of each tutoring session. Two studies were cited in Michigan, one at Northwestern College and the other at Michigan State University, in which researchers tracked students' progress from tutoring sessions to final written products, and evaluated the degree of improvement in the students' writing directly related to the tutoring sessions. In both cases the project was extremely time consuming and could not be funded beyond a semester or two of work. The results, however, were positive in that a strong correlation between tutoring and writing improvement was demonstrated in both studies. This kind of evaluation, although costly and time consuming, will be important to the future funding of writing centers. While those of us who work in writing centers are aware of the success rates, convincing others outside the program can be more difficult; however, I think empirical data will help transform attitudes and myths about the success of WAC programs and writing centers.

The discussion then turned to using questionnaires and like documents as follow-up tools of evaluation. The group examined several documents used by Macomb CC. In addition, I presented my approach to using our "tutoring report form" as a window into the session for those program directors who could not be in the writing center to observe sessions regularly. This discussion led to a possible collaborative presentation at the East Central Writing Centers Association Conference in March by directors from Macomb, UM Flint, and MCCC.

As an outcome of this conference, each of the four MCCC Writing Fellows in attendance presented an overview of one session to the full Writing Fellow group at a meeting on 31 Oct. Following is an example of one of those reports.

Idea Days Report

This year's Ideas Exchange Conference held at the South campus of Macomb Community College provided me with some insights into other writing center practices. At the conference, faculty and student staffs represented writing centers in varying stages of development, and while some collegiate writing centers achieve notable levels of success--MCCC included--all continually search for better tutoring methods.

In the morning session I attended, *Tricks of the Tutoring Trade*, the focus quickly shifted from suggestions for handling angry student clients to error-ridden papers. An administrator of a new writing center commented about a student who returned to school after a fifteen year absence. She posed the question, "What do you do when a paper is so laden with grammatical errors that you couldn't possibly address them all in the tutoring session?" Upon further questioning, the group learned that the paper suffered solely from grammatical errors, and not from organization, structure, or other high order concerns. A MSU peer tutor responded, "Maybe the problems stem from a lack of confidence rather than not knowing grammar rules."

The MSU tutor's comment deepened my understanding of the link between errors and confidence. So, as the discussion centered on placing the student writer into remediation, I interjected my thoughts. In my discourse with the group, I related the idea of scheduling a series of writing center appointments to systematically work on the errors. I reasoned, by concentrating on only a few areas each time, the student's writing skills would improve, thereby building his or her confidence. Through my training, I learned to meet each student where he or she is at in the writing process, and while this student writer had numerous low order errors, possibly because of low confidence, he or she would benefit from a label-free environment.

Technology headlined the *Break-Out Session* I attended during the afternoon. Scott Russell from UM-Flint mediated the discussion and asked the participants to list the technology used in their writing centers and any problems they have encountered. After reviewing the lists, Scott noted the absence of a pen or pencil as a tool of technology. This revelation seemed to surprise everyone, including myself. An impromptu group survey established the computer as the primary tool for composing and the pen as the primary tool for revising.

Similarly to the other group members, when I think of technology, I think of computers and on-line databases. As the discussion continued, the MSU writing center director noted the progressive replacement of library books with information derived from on-line sources. She further speculated that without gatekeepers, writing centers could encounter ethical dilemmas concerning the dependency on the Internet for research, the possibility of having writing center services directed by non-educational based sources, and the elimination of face-to-face tutoring.

Prior to the day's sessions, MSU presented a series of performance narratives dealing with the same questions, fears, and doubts writers undergo while writing and tutors undergo while tutoring. Beginning with these similarities, I started my journey into the perceptual differences of tutoring methods. At the day's end, I concluded that technology can complement face-to-face tutoring and differing methods can still achieve the same goal of improving writing skills.

Cheryl Bunker

WAC Represented at Trends

On October 11, John Holladay, Robert Merkel, and myself presented a session on WAC at the annual Trends conference. John Holladay opened the session by presenting the background information relative to the creation of our program. He discussed the real need on campus for a writing center, and the importance of assigning tutors (Writing Fellows) to individual courses. He also encouraged those who are not using writing in their courses to begin doing so because writing involves students in the subject material and creates a more interactive learning environment.

I then presented the theory behind "Discovery Writing" by defining discovery writing and providing several examples. My presentation focused on changing the objective of writing from "just writing for writing's sake" to writing for a purpose: learning. I suggested that if we make

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students write without avenues for sharing their work with others, and without a specific purpose in mind, students will always consider writing to be a valueless chore. If, however, we make writing part of the process of learning, and provide students with access to sharing their work--which may mean as little as participating in a discussion and as much as formal publication--students will respond with greater enthusiasm and view writing much differently.

Bob Merkel, then presented several concrete examples of discovery writing and demonstrated how each might work in the classroom. He discussed how each type of discovery writing might facilitate discussion and learning that might not otherwise be achieved by students. He demonstrated how students become more focused on a subject and respond more enthusiastically when presented with the challenge of using written language in a learning environment.

We believe our ideas were well received by those in attendance, and we think we presented a valuable message. Because we hoped to take our show on the road in March, we presented a well prepared collaborative proposal on WAC to the Four C's conference. Our proposal, however, was not accepted. Nevertheless, we are undaunted and will attempt to present our WAC program at other conferences--mostly because we have been so inspired by the acceptance of Bill McCloskey's hastily prepared proposal to the same Four C's conference.

WRITING FELLOW ASSIGNMENTS: Fall 1996

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
B.J. Harmon	Math 171-01	MTWF	8-9	31	Alicia Ferris Tricia Spitulski
	Math 164-01	MTWF	9-10	34	Penny Luplow Roblyn Warns
	Math 164-02	MTWF	2-3	7	Cheryl Bunker
	Math 157-01	MWF	10-11	28	Brian Shortridge Molly Lindsey
	Math 157-02	T/R	11-12:30	33	Tina Waterstradt Marla Roberson
Richard Manion	Hist 154-03	T/R	5:30-7PM	25	Katrina Seguin
Lawrence Leach	Phil 253-01	MWF	11-12	21	Michelle Tomich
	Phil 152-51	MW/Whitman	1-2:30	18	Roblyn Warns
	Spch 151-02	T/R	9:30-11	24	Linda Secco
Joanne Jackson	Engl 252-01	S	9-12	17	Amy Collins
Robert Merkel	Engl 256-01	T/R	9:30-11	23	Emily Woltman
	Engl 256-02	MWF	1-2	12	Nichole Nemec
	Music 165-01	T/R	11-12:30	15	Marla Roberson
John Holladay	Phil 151-01	MWF	9-10	22	Julie Montri
	Phil 152-01	T/R	9:30-11	27	Carolyn Friedrich John Anwiler
	Phil 152-02	MW	5:30-7PM	22	Cindy Petricko

James Devries	Anthr 152-01	MWF	10-11	32	Cheryl Bunker Diana Agy
Margie Bacarella	Polsc 151-03	T/R	9:30-11	34	Steve Mullins Jim Brown
	Polsc 101-01	MW	7:8:30PM	15	Tammy Hartung
Michael Mohn	Mech 101-01	MWF	8-9	20	Nichole Wojtyniak
	Mech 101-02	T/R	7-9PM	23	Lisa Smith
Karen Rimanelli	Psych 151-53	MW Whitman	7:30-9PM	33	Bonnie Berry Tricia Spitulski
Don Hyatt	BusAd 151-01	T/R	2-4	34	Krista Sims Tina Waterstradt
Robert Tarrant	Acctng 251-01	MW	5-7	22	Penny Luplow
Barbara Long	Physc 151-01	MW	5:30-7PM	11	Tracy Boudrie
Joe Costello	Polsc 151-12	W	7-10PM	35	Nichole Nemec Christina Hernandez
Claudia Cines	Mcom 103-01	MW	9-10:30	22	Susan Vincelli
	Mcom 106-01	T	7-10PM	13	George Rhodes

Michigan Student Scholars Conference

What do Cheryl Bunker, Janine Sitch, George Rhodes, and Brandy Lingar have in common? They are all MCCC students who were finalists in the first Conference for Student Scholars at Michigan's Two-Year Colleges, held at Delta College on September 28. Their work was selected from over 100 entries from two-year colleges across Michigan. Since I was a reader-judge for the preliminary entries, I am aware of the quality of competition from which these students' work was chosen. The fact that we had four students as finalists is quite extraordinary, and speaks to the quality of our students and institution.

Each of the finalists delivered an oral presentation of their work judged by a university specialist from each discipline. I think anyone who listened to the presentations was impressed with each student's knowledge and preparation.

In addition to being finalists, Janine and Cheryl were selected as overall winners in their categories, and were awarded $100.00 and publication in the Student Scholars Journal. If you have any of these students in your courses, you might congratulate them for their efforts.

There is, however, one more thing that each of these students have in common: each of them used the Writing Center during the development of their work. I might go out on a limb and suggest that conferencing with a Writing Fellow may have helped. As we say in our advertisements, the Writing Center is for everyone, and the best students at MCCC know that. Please encourage your students to write and use the Writing Center so that we can continue our representation at the Student Scholar conference.

Breaking the Writing Myths

In a study of skilled versus unskilled writers [by Nancy Sommers], the skilled writers spent more of their time in various kinds of revision than the unskilled writers, who tended not to look back over their drafts when they had finished writing them. This suggests that, contrary to popular myths about writing, better writers spend more of their time, not less, revising (qtd. in Anson and Schwegler, The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers 84).

Internet News

There may be a few Internet sites that some of you are interested in. The first concerns documentation of research papers. While the fourth edition of the MLA discusses CD-Rom and Online Databases, it is woefully inept (as in having nothing) in discussing documentation of Internet sources. I have found, as many of my students have, a reliable source on the Internet. The title is: "Beyond the MLA Handbook: Documenting Electronic Sources on the Internet." The URL for this site is:

http://www.falcon.eku.edu/honors/beyond-mla

This site seems to draw on the best ideas of a few others like Janice Walker who did some of the earliest work in this area.

The site also provides numerous links to other sites that include further discussions of documenting Internet sources. Those of you who are assigning research work might want to include this information in your syllabus, since your students will increasingly gravitate to the Internet for their research.

A second site you may want to discuss with your students is the Purdue University OWL (Online Writing Lab) Homepage. The URL for this is:

http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/introduction.html

This site provides numerous writing links for online help in developing essays, research reports, grammar, and style. When we are online, we will have a similar site for MCCC. But until then, I recommend Purdue's site. It is one of the best and I am certain you and your students will find some valuable information on writing improvement.

Fall 1996 Writing Fellow Class

(Front Row, left to-right) Cindy Petricko, Nichole Wojtyniak, Marla Roberson, Roblyn Warns, Mischele Tomich, Penny Luplow) (Second Row) Tim Dillon, Bonnie Berry, Christina Hernandez, Linda Secco, Carolyn Friedrich, Krista Sims, Susan Vincelli, Brian Shortridge, Amy Collins (Third Row) John Anwiler, Jim Brown,

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Language For Learning News

Vol. 9, No. 2, May 1997
Editor: Timothy J. Dillon
Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program for Staff and Students

. . .From the Editor. . .

With the end of winter and spring semesters, another year of dedicated work by the Writing Fellows draws to a close. In 1996-1997 we have conducted over two thousand conferences, visited several colleges, participated in several conferences, and worked to serve students and faculty on MCCC's campus. I know how hard the Writing Fellows work and how dedicated they are to the goal of making their peers better writers. They don't make much money, they don't work under the best conditions, and they don't do this because they have time to burn. On the contrary, most of the WF's are extremely busy with college courses, families, and other jobs.

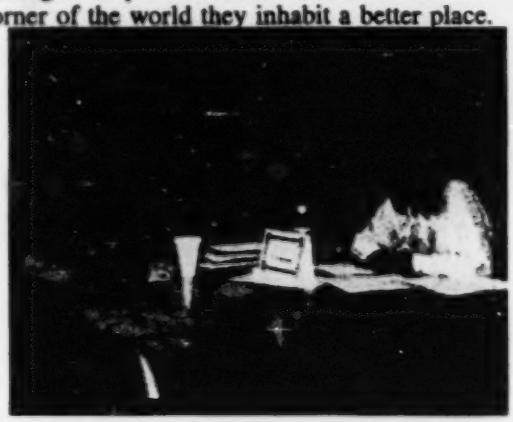
Why do they do it? Well, there are rewards. They gain a sense of confidence in themselves, they become better writers, they learn to work with all types of people, and they gain a sense of community spirit--a realization that we are all in this thing we call education together. I know that my three years as WAC Coordinator has reinforced my belief that there are still people who take pride in their work, who are willing to help others in need, and who will make the corner of the world they inhabit a better place.

When you read this newsletter, it will be the end of spring semester or the beginning of fall. In either case, I hope you will demonstrate your appreciation for the Writing Fellows by giving them recognition. You can do this as faculty by participating in the program, by allowing WF's to explain the program to your classes, or by saying positive things about the program to your students. If you are a student, you can show up to appointments on time and understand that while writing is difficult, the tutor is there to help you.

This spring issue of Language For Learning features the Writing Fellows. Several articles by Writing Fellows will give you some insight into their experiences as writing tutors. I hope you enjoy them. In addition, I have launched a column called "Student/Faculty Information Desk" that I hope will answer questions both students and faculty might have about our program. Also enclosed in this issue for faculty is the request for fall 1997 Writing Fellows. As in the past, requests will be honored in the order that I receive them--to ensure your place in the Writing Fellow program, get your request in early.

Finally, if you are reading this in spring, have a nice vacation; and welcome back!

. . .It's a fact!
"Listening is the means by which we confirm for others the importance of their existence in our lives.



Writing Fellow, Trish Spitulski (right), and student, Lisa Smith (left), discuss revision strategies for Lisa's paper.

. . .It's a fact!
You learned about 14,000 new words between the ages of two and six. Your vocabulary development then declined until college. Now, every new course you take exposes you to hundreds of new terms.

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Student/Faculty <> Information Desk

Where is the Writing Center and how do I make an appointment?
The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the CLRC in room C-218. It is found in the same room as the Learning Assistance Lab (LAL) and all appointments can be scheduled, canceled, or changed by stopping in or by calling 384-4167.

Although we welcome walk-ins, if you do not have an appointment immediate tutoring may not be available. It is wise to call ahead.

When is the Writing Center open?
The Writing Center is open:

8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday;
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday; and
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday.
*Spring hours may vary.

Who can use the Writing Center?
Any full or part-time MCCC student, continuing education student, faculty, or staff. (Many students are enrolled in a fellowed class and may be required to have a writing conference as part of the course requirements.)

What services are provided by the WC?
Writing Fellows are trained to help you with any stage of the writing process. You may want to discuss planning a writing assignment, revising a draft, or strategies for editing.

Remember that although you may want to discuss spelling, punctuation, and grammar, the Writing Fellow will address the most serious problems in your writing before moving on to other things. These include thesis statements, topic sentences, paragraph unity, and transitions.

How often can I use the Writing Center?
A student may use the WC as often as necessary. In fact, we recommend students make several appointments for each writing assignment, so they can work through the stages of the writing process with competent feedback at each stage.

Hey! Isn't this cheating? Is the WF going to write all or some of my paper?
No! On both questions. Writing Fellows will not write any portion of a paper, and they will not identify all of the errors.

They will teach you strategies for finding your mistakes and strategies for correcting them. In addition they will discuss strategies for developing each stage of your paper--these are life-long skills that you can use for all types of writing--school, work, or entertainment.

What subjects can Writing Fellows handle?
All subjects that have a writing component. The Writing Fellow does not have to be proficient in the subject area of the assignment. The WF will deal with the writing problems that are found in all writing, in all academic disciplines.

Is the Writing Center a designated study area for students?
No! Because the LAL houses several programs, space is limited. If you need a study area, one is available in the library. Please limit your time in the Writing Center to your conference times only.

What should I bring to a conference?
While Writing Fellows will help you brainstorm for ideas, it is usually best to bring something tangible to work on: (e.g., a list of ideas, an outline, or a draft).

We also recommend you bring the instructor's assignment sheet or the notes you wrote about the scope, depth, and format of the assignment.

Please type or write legibly all writing you want to discuss with the Writing Fellow.

Do I have to do what the Writing Fellow tells me to do? Will my instructor know?
No to the first question! As stated earlier, Writing Fellows will give you suggestions for improvement and strategies for getting things done. As a writer, however, you will determine what goes in and what stays out of your writing.

On the second question, the answer is maybe. The report sheet the Writing Fellow gives you is always provided to help you remember what to work on to improve your writing. Your instructor, however, may expect you to attach a copy of the conference report to your paper as proof of your conference.

Who takes care of problems?
Technically, you should see WAC Coordinator, Tim Dillon (office #204 CLRC--ph. 384-4295), if you have a serious problem with the Writing Center's services or if you have a question about the program.

If your problem is immediate, such as a question about appointments, you can ask the person at the appointment desk, or ask to talk to Dr. Cindy Riedel or Jane Clevenger. Dr. Reidel is in charge of the LAL and Jane deals with day to day problems. If all else fails, see Peggy Faunt in the Humanities Office (CLRC 201). She knows everything!

Is this a program for slow learners and people who can't write?
No! Studies indicate that the most successful writers are those who seek assistance at different stages of the writing process. In fact, it is usually true that the best writers on campus use the Writing Center services most frequently.

How much does this service cost?
While the college invests a substantial amount of money in the WAC program, the Writing Center's services are free to all students, faculty, and staff. It is one of several free support services offered by the college to help students in pursuit of academic goals.

What can I expect to gain from a conference with a WF?
As stated earlier, you will acquire several strategies for revising and editing papers. In addition, you will probably gain an understanding of the writing process that all writers use, and you will gain confidence in your own ability to grow and improve as a writer.

How do I make that appointment again?
Stop by the second floor of the CLRC in room C-218, or call 384-4167. We hope to see you there!

. . .It's a fact!
The word draft, used in the sense of creating a preliminary document, comes from a word originally related to draw.

Writing Fellows Reflect on Tutoring

I often assign my Writing Fellows in 254 Advanced Composition the task of finding an adage, aphorism, quote, or expression and applying the same to their tutoring experiences. The results are usually interesting. Several students have used this opportunity to make some very astute observations of the writing conference experience. I might call them "minimalist autobiographies." I thought you might like to read some of these; so with their permission, I am publishing these in this newsletter. Reading these will give you an inside look at some of the victories, some of the failures, and some of the frustrations the Writing Fellows experience. Please remember as you read these, that a Writing Fellow's job is very difficult, and that these were written at the end of a very long semester. So if at times a little sarcasm comes through, it is not meant to be critical of students--more just an observation of real life. I hope you enjoy reading these essays.

All That Knowledge Is

by Jim Brown

In his 1939 work, The Web and the Rock, Thomas Wolfe wrote, "This is what knowledge really is. It is finding out something for oneself with pain, with joy, with exultance, with labor, and with all the little ticking, breathing moments of our lives, until it is ours as that only is ours which is rooted in the structure of our lives." This is a description of my experience as a Writing Fellow. I found that the best way to learn to be a tutor is to experience the situation first hand. The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors and class discussion provided helpful hints, but the valuable learning came only from experience in the Writing Center. My experience as a Writing Fellow was sometimes painful, sometimes enjoyable, often very demanding, but always a learning experience.

I was very nervous when I walked into the Writing Center for my first day. I had spent only three weeks in Advanced Composition class and there I was preparing to give advice to students about writing. Worry and fear accompanied me to the appointment book. I said a little prayer and slowly opened it with all of the enthusiasm of a child preparing for a trip to the dentist. I flipped to the Thursday appointments, still clinging to the hope that I would not have an appointment. Just my luck, penciled in next to my name was an appointment for 4:30 p.m. After I realized that the woman was probably not going to

forget her appointment or suddenly come down with a major illness, I began to accept, ready or not, that my life as a Writing Fellow was about to begin.

Despite my prayers, at about 4:25 I noticed a woman, who I will call Pam, enter the Writing Center. I introduced myself and we sat down. She explained the assignment was for her business class and she was supposed to summarize a business article in a one-half page paper. I was relieved this was a relatively straight forward assignment I had completed many times as a student, and I asked her to read her paper aloud.

Fears and anxieties disappeared after I looked at her paper. Pam's paper was not terrible but it needed a lot of work. It consisted only of a list of the article's major points with no explanation. It looked like more of an outline of the article's structure than it did a summary. We talked about ways to incorporate her list into paragraph form, and I explained to her that half of a page was not sufficient space to explain every point in the article in great detail. She needed to summarize the article's main idea in detail. I had not learned how to handle this situation in class, but I was able to develop a solution on my own--this greatly increased my confidence.

After my first conference as a Writing Fellow, I was confident of my abilities to help students with their writing. I realized that the interaction with the student is what being a Writing Fellow is all about. I felt good about myself because I had helped a student improve her paper and her writing in just thirty minutes. Most importantly, I realized that although the information I had learned in class was helpful, I would have to solve most problems on my own, without the comfort of learning the solutions from a book or lecture. We had not talked about a paper like Pam's in Advanced Composition, but I was still able to offer some helpful suggestions. It was after my first appointment that I knew my time as a Writing Fellow would indeed by a learning experience.

My first session was thankfully not my only successful one. In another session, I was able to apply what I learned in class just a few days earlier to help a student with writing anxiety. This student, who I will call Stacy, was crying because she had never written a college paper before and she had no idea how to write. She was a student from my fellowed class; the students were writing papers that involved research. Stacy had cited only one source and the paper required five. She was not off to a good start and her anxiety was not helping her.

I decided that I would let her talk about her fears and anxieties for a while. As we talked, she kept mentioning that she had no idea how to organize her paper. I explained to her that she should not worry about organizing her paper until she had completed the research and obtained all the information needed to write the paper. We talked about breaking the assignment into separate manageable tasks, something which I had just recently learned in Advanced Composition. I was pleased to see that the information I had learned in class was actually useful, and Stacy was pleased and much calmer when she left. This session allowed me to solve a problem by simply applying what I had learned in class, but most of my appointments were not that easy.

There were many appointments when students would stump me with a problem that was never discussed or only briefly discussed in Advanced Composition. These situations required the use of my personal knowledge and experience with the "writing process." One student and I were trying out new ideas in an awkward part of a paper and I suggested ways in which I had solved a similar problem with my own writing in the past. This lead to the solution for the student's paper. This type of problem solving was not taught to me by an instructor. I learned it out of necessity because the answer to the problem was not in a handbook or classroom notes, but in my own experiences with writing.

Many times students would ask me questions that I did not know the answers to. In these instances, the student and I would grab a handbook and look up the answers together. If the answer wasn't in a handbook we would put our heads together and figure out the answer anyway. In these sessions both the student and I learned something. In some ways, I think this is a more productive way of learning. I am much more likely to remember the information when I have to admit to a student that I don't know the answer and have to look it up than I would be if I sat in class and read the information in a book. No class or lesson can adequately prepare a person for work as a Writing Fellow. No amount of class time could address every possible scenario that a Writing Fellow could encounter. Writing is too dynamic a process to be completely covered in a classroom. Each student who comes to the Writing Center has his or her own approach to writing and his or her own problems.

Many of these problems cannot be solved by looking in a text book, and it is up to the Writing Fellow to find a solution. In this manner the Writing Fellow is constantly learning as he teaches students about the writing process. This type of learning cannot be accomplished in the classroom. Much like the student driver who never learns to drive a car until she is out of the classroom and behind the wheel, or the child who never learns to ride a bike until his parents stop giving instructions and let him ride on his

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own, I did not really learn much about how to be a Writing Fellow until I began working as one.

As I look back on the experience now, I realize that I learned just about as much as the students who came to see me. There was a lot that I did know, and a lot more that I didn't know about writing. There were times when I was extremely helpful and times when I felt like I was totally useless to a student. However, in the end I know that I helped many more students than I didn't help, and that is all I can ask for. Even if I helped improve the writing of only one student, my time as a Writing Fellow was not a waste.

Making the Grade

by Timothy Lusch

Tara was afraid. I could tell by the way she looked at me. "Strickland will grade this paper hard," she said. I knew she wasn't kidding around. I read the assignment sheet and wondered if I could even write the paper. It didn't matter anyway. Helping her mattered, and for the first time this semester I didn't know if I could do it.

Good grades don't come easy in college. Especially with all the pressures that surround getting them. One test or one paper could very easily ruin a college career. Tara thought hers was all but over; that is, unless she did well enough on this paper to get "the" grade. As I read her paper, I decided we didn't have much to go on. I figured we would do the best we could with what we had. But the little voice that all writers hear kept telling me our best wouldn't be good enough. In my mind, I agreed.

Lacking confidence, I wondered where Elbow, Zinsser, and Fulwiler were (three writing gurus who instruct and inspire in their books about writing). I had a childlike belief that one of them might appear before me, you know, like a genie. The table began to shake and I was sure Elbow had arrived. Looking under the table, I noticed Tara's legs working like pistons in a car engine. The speed. The up and down motion. Her nervousness. It was all there, except for Elbow. Smiling, as if to reassure her, I noticed the jagged edges of her once beautiful fingernails. What happened to them I wondered? Maybe she's a cannibal I thought.

She reminded me again how bad she needed to get "the" grade. I know, I know, I reassured her. I read the paper again. No direction. No thesis. The literary works she chose to critique were probably some of the best ever written. Her paper was a comedy of errors and I was the court jester. I feared the worst. Failure! Then it came to me. The quote. I read it in Reader's Digest several weeks before: "The highest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it." A guy by the name of John Ruskin said it. Who is he? I don't know. But it made me think. Millions of people work hard all their lives so they can get overtime pay, get extra vacation days, or get a new car. But how many people work hard because it makes them a better person? Because it makes them appreciate what they have and who they are? I thought about Tara, her paper, and "the" grade. My job was to help her become a better writer.

I told her about my revelation. She just stared at me with the look of a deer blinded by a car's headlights. She probably thinks I'm crazy, I thought. I wondered if she was going to eat me like she did her nails. And then I saw it. That little flame of hope. It was flickering in her eyes. "You're right" she said. "If I become a better writer good grades are sure to follow." I couldn't believe it. My spirits were lifted; my hope renewed. We jumped right into her paper like two mechanics hovering over the engine of a car. We tinkered with new ideas and developed old ones. I gave her some tips from the three genies (none of whom made it to the session by the way). The paper, my advice, it all came together. Not for "the" grade, but for better writing. It was glorious. A triumph.

Weeks later, I saw Tara in the library. I asked her how she did on the paper. She said she didn't get "the" grade.

"I'm sorry," I said.

"I'm not," she said.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," she said. "I'm a better writer now."

"You Can't Always Get What You Want"

by Steve Mullins

The great songwriter of England, Mick Jagger, once uttered the phrase, "You can't always get what you want." While Mick may have never been a Writing Fellow, his words capture the wonder of following MCCC's pursuit of writing excellence. The plight of the Writing Fellow is but a sad reminder that now matter how hard we try, there is always a dangling modifier lurking, waiting for discussion. No matter how hard we try to eliminate verbs of being (am, is, are, was, were, being, been) from a student's paper, they always rear their ugly heads. But as a Writing Fellow, I fear not. For I am one of the chosen. Chosen to spend two hours a week in the think tank known as the LAL (Learning Assistance Lab). Chosen

to lead the masses from their plight as non-writers to the promised land of efficient writing--where they can rub elbows with Peter Elbow and Toby Fulwiler. I accept this challenge, and I do so with honor.

Every Friday this semester, from 2-4, I take on all challenges. Compare and contrast, division and classification, or analysis--no paper stands in my way of the truth--the truth that anyone can learn to write. It does not matter to me if students have been out of school ten years, or if students have been told that they are better at science and math than writing. When they bring me their rough drafts (with or without assignment sheets), I am ready. As they sit before me, I see fear in their eyes. My only wishes are that they did not have to join me in my den, and that they already knew all the rules of the English language. But alas! "You can't always get what you want."

The LAL becomes still, as if there is a chill in the air. The student knows that we have joined together to fight the common enemy: the writing assignment. After the obligatory greetings are exchanged, it is time to go to war. I read. The student waits. The student makes the standard comments of how he or she was out all night partying and did not get in until 4 a.m., and how he or she almost died while writing this paper. As a veteran, I have heard all the stories before, but I diligently push on. I take notes, carefully watching the writer's every move. The writer will use everything in his arsenal--faulty logic, lack of introduction or conclusion, not following the professor's instructions-- the list could on forever. But we have not the time. We must attack. Time? There is never enough. Remember the words of the Englishman.

I secretly plan my strategy. I must assess the writer's strong points, and account for all the weak points. Should I tackle agreement or clarity? Is the writer using incorrect pronouns, or is he or she using split infinitives? Every battle calls for different tactics. One false move and we could lose the student's trust forever. We begin by attacking "verbs of being." I discuss passive and active voice. The student nods in agreement, but he is unsure of the terrain. Quickly, I shift gears, discussing introductions and conclusions. Once again, there is a faint gesture of remembrance, hearkening to an English class long ago.

I try not to tense. I will show no fear in the face of the enemy or in the face of the student. And then I see the light. The second part of Jagger's lyric: "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need." Armed with this priceless idea, the battle turns in our favor.

We turn to fragments. I ask the student to face the enemy directly and read a sentence aloud. Quietly entering enemy territory, the student utters the sentence. The enemy has been caught by surprise as a huge smile appears on the student's face. "Oh yes, I see," exclaims the student. And he does see. Armed with the notion that this writing business is not as difficult as it seemed, the student prepares to take on all opponents. We discuss agreement, freewriting and clustering, better ideas for revising, and MLA format. The lights are burning bright, and indeed, someone is home. Victory is ours. . . until the next paper.

These victories make being a Writing Fellow worth the effort. Even when all appears hopeless, there is hope that the student will take something away from the battle. I always wish the student good luck, and I hope he or she will return to the battle field again. I think that Mick Jagger does not know any Writing Fellows because if he did he might have to change his lyric to: "You can't always get what you want [at first], but if you try sometimes, well you just might find, that you get what you need. [Indeed!]."

Writing Fellow of the Year Award

At the 1996-1997 MCCC Awards Banquet, Cheryl Hoy was awarded the Writing Fellow of the Year Award. The recipient is selected by the Writing Fellows. Cheryl (left in photo) has been active in the program since winter of 1995. She has volunteered for extra work every semester--sometimes fellowing two classes at the same time. She has also written articles for the newsletter, participated in conferences, and worked on data documentation for the WAC Annual Report. Cheryl is moving on to the University of Toledo next year, and all of us in the Writing Fellow program will miss her.

The Writing Fellow program has been very busy both winter and spring semesters. We had 22 faculty members participating in the program and we fellowed 33 courses. The number of students in these courses totaled 612. This is a strong indication that writing is alive and well on the campus of Monroe County Community College. We thank each of the faculty members who participated in the Writing Fellow program, and we also thank those of you who encouraged your students to use the Writing Center on their own. Below is the list of participating faculty, courses, and Writing Fellows.

WRITING FELLOW ASSIGNMENTS: Winter 1997

Instructor	Course	Day(s)	Time	Enrollment	Writing Fellows
B. J. Harmon	Math 171-01	M/W	1:30-3	25	Emily Woltman
	Math 172-01	MTWF	8-9	17	Brian Shortridge
Richard Manion	Hist 154-01	M/W	5:30-7	31	Tina Waterstradt
					Steve Riggs
Robert Merkel	Engl 256-01	T/R	11:12:30	18	Lorrie Koenig
	Engl 256-51	M/W	4-5:30	22	Marla Roberson
	Music 165-01	T/R	9:30-11	25	Susan Vincelli
John Holladay	Phil 151-01	M/W/F	11-12	22	Julie Montri
	Phil 152-01	T/R	9:30-11	22	Tracy Boudrie
James Devries	Hist 160-01	M/W/F	10-11	20	Diana Agy
	Soc 151-03	T/R	11-12:30	29	Vanya Steel
					Tim Lusch
	Soc 151-05	T/R	5:30-7	24	Chris Wild
Margie Bacarella	Polsc 151-04	M/W/F	10-11	22	Mischele Tomich
	Polsc 151-07	M/W/F	12-1	27	Linda Secco
					Sue Duvall
	Polsc 151-08	T/R	1:30-3	35	John Anwiler
					Steve Mullins
Michael Mohn	Mech 101-01	M/W	10-12	17	Michelle Mclaughlin
	Mech 101-02	M/W	5-7	23	Nichole Wojtyniak
Robert Tarrant	Acctng 254-01	M/W	5-7	20	Penny Luplow
Claudia Cines	Mcom 103-01	M/W	7-8:30	18	Janice Alt
Ann Orwin	Engl 252-01	T/R	9:30-11	14	Sarah Weisbach
Bill McCloskey	Engl 260-01	M/W	9:30-11	10	Tricia Spitulski
Stan Davis	Soc 252-01	M/W/F	11-12	18	George Rhodes
Cheryl McKay	Acctg 205-01	T/R	7-8:30	23	Ann Sobecki
Kim Goss	Music 265-51	T/R	4-5:30	27	Cheryl Hoy
					Carolyn Friedrich
Lori Bean	Chem 160-01	T	9:30-12:30	19	Amy Collins
Diane Archer	Soc 151-51	M/W	2:30-4	22	Terri Celski
	Soc 152-51	M/W	10:30-12	16	Roblyn Warns
Joanna Briganti	Bmgt 111-01	T/R	11-12:30	17	Stephanie Moore
Terry Telfer	Engl 251-51	M/W	12:30-2	20	Tammy Hartung
	Engl 260-51	T/R	5:35-7	11	Bonnie Berry

WRITING FELLOW ASSIGNMENTS: Spring 1997

John Holladay	Phil 151-01	M/T/W/R	5-7	12	Cheryl Hoy
Roger Spalding	Astrn 151-01	M/T/W/R	10-12:30	27	George Rhodes
					Diana Agy
Terry Telfer	Engl 251-51	M/T/W/R	10-12:30	9	George Rhodes
Frank Green	Engl 252-01	M/T/W/R	10:30-12:30	12	Tricia Spitulski

WAC Program Involved in Off-Campus Activities

We are always eager to share our tutoring experiences with other colleges. As the WAC Coordinator, I think it is important for our tutors to see how other programs work. In March, we were invited by Arthur Lindenberg (WAC Director) to visit Schoolcraft College in Livonia, MI. Schoolcraft modeled their program after ours about three years ago; however, it is not quite like ours today. Several of our Writing Fellows sat down with their Writing Fellows for an in-depth discussion of policies and procedures. In the following summary, Cheryl Hoy points out some of the similarities and differences in the two programs.

Page 410 in a Writing Fellow's Biography

by Cheryl Hoy

Faculty recommendation--interview with the Writing Fellow Coordinator--Advanced Comp. class--Fellowed classes--monthly meetings--tuition credit--stipends. Are these features indicative of only our (MCCC) writing program? On Tuesday, 18 March 1997, eight MCCC Writing Fellows discovered another collegiate program with these characteristics but with contradistinctive twists.

Schoolcraft Community College's Writing Fellow program, under the direction of Arthur Lindenberg, initially follows MCCC's path. Prospective students with GPA's at 3.5 or higher and recommendations by full and part-time faculty are interviewed for acceptance into the program. Next, the new WF's enroll in an advanced composition course, ensuring placement in the program, tuition credit, and a cash stipend at semester's end. Each semester, new WF's attend monthly meetings with Senior Fellows.

The common path of the two programs begins to diverge with the Advanced Composition course. While both schools mandate an advanced English class for all Writing Fellows, Schoolcraft opens theirs to the general student body. In this class prospective Fellows learn tutoring strategies through "fish bowl" exercises in which they engage in role playing to illustrate various tutoring situations. Writing assignments consist of a research paper and journal, an article review, a persuasion essay, a travel or memoir descriptive narrative, and one page of a real or fictitious autobiography. The Writing Fellows take one test and read one text--William Zinsser's On Writing Well. Most choose to work with a specific class; however, only a few work in the Writing Center.

The paper cycle in our Writing Center is limited to the student-writer, Writing Fellow, and instructor; however, their Writing Center maintains three separate folders for student papers. One folder contains the papers from students who have conference appointments--Schoolcraft's Writing Fellows prefer twenty minute conferences while ours are thirty minutes. The remaining two folders contain incoming and outgoing papers. Since the students are not required to meet "face to face" with a Writing Fellow, papers are dropped off, critiqued by a WF, and picked up by the student later. If the student has questions about the WF's comments, it is the student's responsibility to contact the WF.

The methods of evaluating students' papers unraveled the remaining common threads of the two programs and caused the most concern among the visiting MCCC Writing Fellows. Schoolcraft Fellows evaluate the paper, noting every error. In addition to checking the appropriate boxes on the report form, they write directly on the student's paper--a practice forbidden in our program. In one of Schoolcraft's fellowed courses, the instructor required the Writing Fellows to assign grades to each student's paper. Through our discussion, we learned how uncomfortable Schoolcraft's Writing Fellows were with this practice because they recognized the need for a Writing Center to remain a safe environment for students seeking help.

While comparing other Writing Fellow Programs to MCCC's can develop into an "us-them" mentality, the circumstances of each program must be considered. Schoolcraft's program is younger than ours, is still developing, and serves a larger population. The fundamental purpose of a Writing Center is to help students write and revise papers, and to present information and ideas clearly. As Cynthia Cashmore, a Schoolcraft Writing Fellow stated, "The transition from mind to paper. . .that's where the problem can be." As Writing Fellows, we share the common goal of serving our peers in the most advantageous method and the organization of our respective programs reflects this goal.

Name of Student: _____ Date Draft Received: _____

Writing Fellow: _____ Date Draft Returned: _____

Instructor: _____ Dept/Course: _____

Date of Conference: _____ Student had ____ did not have ____ assignment sheet.

Writing Assignment: (check one)

___ 500+ Word Theme ___ Essay Test ___ Paragraph
___ Book or Article Review ___ Journal ___ Research Paper
___ Business Report ___ Lab Report ___ Technical Report
___ Creative Writing ___ Outline ___ Other

Writer is at which stage of the writing process?

___ Prewriting: talking, outlining, researching, listing ideas, exploratory writing
___ Revision: limiting or adding ideas, reworking thesis, moving paragraphs or sentences, mapping paragraphs/topic sentences
___ Editing: grammar, spelling, punctuation
___ Final Draft: proofread for typos/mechanics
___ Rewrite of Graded Paper

Writer needed assistance with content (high order)

___ understanding the subject
___ determining the main idea (thesis)
___ developing ideas: examples, explanations, statistics, researched materials, expert testimony, other _____
___ finding topic sentences
___ focusing on purpose and audience: tone/vocab
___ other _____

Writer needed assistance with organization

__ example __ narrative __ descriptive __ argument
__ comparison __ analysis __ definition __ process
__ div/class __ cause/effect __ analogy __ other

___ arranging ideas in a recognized order: spatial, rank of importance, chronological, logical
___ writing an introduction
___ arranging paragraphs in an effective order
___ paragraph unity: each focused on a single idea
___ paragraph cohesiveness: all linked to the thesis
___ writing a conclusion

Writer needed assistance with style (middle order)

___ diction: effective word choice, active verbs, concrete nouns, effective use of modifiers
___ syntax: eliminating wordiness, placement of important points in a sentence, avoiding awkward expressions, eliminating clichés and biased language, editing passive voice

Writer needed assistance with editing (low order)

___ punctuation: commas, quotation marks, etc.
___ spelling errors
___ fragments, run-ons, fused sentences
___ grammar: agreement (subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent); shifts in tense, person, number, voice; misplaced modifiers; case

Writer needed assistance with format:

___ following MLA, APA, or other as assigned
___ following instructor's directions

Writing Fellow's Comments:

Rev. 9-1996